THE ROAD TO CIVIL WAR™

MARVEL

A MARVEL COMICS EVENT

THE ROAD TO

CIVIL WAR

A

MARVEL COMICS

PRESENTATION

THE ROAD TO CIVIL WAR

© 2018 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. WWW.MARVEL.COM

NEW AVENGERS: ILLUMINATI

WRITER
BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS

ART
ALEX MALEEV

COLORS
DAVE STEWART

LETTERS
VC'S CHRIS ELIOPOULOS

COVER
GABRIELE DELL'OTTO

ASSISTANT EDITORS
MOLLY LAZER &
AUBREY SITTERSON

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
ANDY SCHMIDT

EDITOR
TOM BREVOORT

FANTASTIC FOUR #536-537

"THE HAMMER FALLS"

WRITER
J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI

PENCILS
MIKE MCKONE

INKS
ANDY LANNING, KEV WALKER,
CAM SMITH & KRIS JUSTICE

COLORS
PAUL MOUNTS

LETTERS
VC'S RUS WOOTON

COVERS
MIKE MCKONE &
BRYAN HITCH

ASSISTANT EDITORS
MOLLY LAZER &
AUBREY SITTERSON

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
ANDY SCHMIDT

EDITOR
TOM BREVOORT

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #529-531

"MR. PARKER GOES TO WASHINGTON"

WRITER
J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI

PENCILS
RON GARNEY &
TYLER KIRKHAM

INKS
BILL REINHOLD,
JAY LEISTEN & SAL REGLA

COLORS
MATT MILLA & JOHN STARR

LETTERS
VC'S CORY PETIT

COVERS
BRYAN HITCH,
MIKE WIERINGO &
RON GARNEY

ASSISTANT EDITOR
MICHAEL O'CONNOR

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
WARREN SIMONS

EDITOR
AXEL ALONSO

COLLECTION EDITOR
JENNIFER GRÜNWALD

ASSISTANT EDITOR
SARAH BRUNSTAD

ASSOCIATE MANAGING EDITOR
ALEX STARBUCK

EDITOR, SPECIAL PROJECTS
MARK D. BEAZLEY

SENIOR EDITOR, SPECIAL
PROJECTS
JEFF YOUNGQUIST

BOOK DESIGNER
DAYLE CHESLER

SVP PRINT, SALES & MARKETING
DAVID GABRIEL

DIGITAL MANAGER/PRODUCTION
TIM SMITH 3

DIGITAL PRODUCTION
ANNIE CHENG

EDITOR IN CHIEF
C.B. CEBULSKI

CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER
JOE QUESADA

PRESIDENT
DAN BUCKLEY

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
ALAN FINE

NEW AVENGERS: ILLUMINATI

WAKANDA, AFRICA
MANY YEARS AGO

HONORED GUESTS OF THE GREAT KINGDOM OF WAKANDA...

IRON MAN, AVENGER, OF THE GREAT AMERICAN STATE OF NEW YORK...

...DOCTOR STEPHEN STRANGE, MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS...

...PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER OF THE XAVIER SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS...

...DOCTOR REED RICHARDS OF THE WORLD-FAMOUS FANTASTIC FOUR...

...KEEPER OF THE TERRIGEN MISTS...THE INHUMAN KING, BLACK BOLT...

AND PRINCE NAMOR OF THE GREAT UNDERWATER CITY OF ATLANTIS...

IT IS THE HOUSE OF WAKANDA'S HONOR TO INTRODUCE TO YOU...

...KING T'CHALLA... THE BLACK PANTHER.

I'VE NEVER BEEN TO WAKANDA BEFORE, T'CHALLA, THIS IS JUST-- IT'S JUST BEAUTIFUL.

DOCTOR STRANGE, YOU MAY STAY AS LONG AS YOU LIKE.

IN FACT, SOME OF OUR HIGH PRIESTS WERE HOPING TO BREAK BREAD WITH YOU PRIVATELY.

WELL, THAT WOULD BE LOVELY.

AND THANK YOU, T'CHALLA, FOR HOSTING THIS.

AND FOR THE LIFE OF ME, I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT SUCH A GATHERING IS FOR. I'M DYING TO HEAR...

PLEASE, TAKE THE ROOM.

WELL, I WANTED TO DISCUSS WHAT ALMOST HAPPENED TO US THIS WEEK...

THIS PLANET WAS ALMOST DECIMATED IN AN INTERPLANETARY BATTLE BETWEEN TWO WARRIOR RACES...

THE KREE AND THE SKRULL ARMIES USED EARTH AS A BATTLEGROUND IN THEIR CENTURIES-OLD WAR...

AND I THINK--I THINK IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN OUR FAULT.

THE KREE-SKRULL WAR IS *OUR* FAULT?

WELL, WE KNEW ALL THE PLAYERS.

WE KNEW WHAT THEY WERE CAPABLE OF.

WE KNEW THESE ALIEN RACES HAVE BEEN AT WAR WITH EACH OTHER FOR-- FOREVER.

AND WE KNEW THAT KEY MEMBERS OF BOTH RACES HAD SET UP SHOP RIGHT HERE ON PLANET EARTH.

OF COURSE IT WOULD COME TO A HEAD. OF COURSE!

SO HOW IS IT OUR FAULT?

I WONDER--IF WE HAD A MORE UNIFIED STRUCTURE AMONGST OURSELVES--

--I WONDER IF THEY WOULD HAVE THOUGHT TWICE ABOUT ATTACKING THIS PLANET LIKE THEY DID.

WE WHO?

IF THE EARTH IS ATTACKED AGAIN... **WHEN** THE EARTH IS ATTACKED AGAIN...

...**WE'RE** THE ONES WHO WILL DEFEND IT. THERE IS NO ONE ELSE. NO ARMY IS READY.

SO, TO THE REST OF THE UNIVERSE **WE'RE** THE LAW ENFORCEMENT OF THIS PLANET.

I'M SAYING-- MAYBE WE SHOULD **GATHER TOGETHER** AND DO JUST THAT.

AGAIN!

WE WHO??

THE HEROES.

US.

ALL OF US.

THE X-MEN, THE AVENGERS, THE INHUMANS, THE FANTASTIC FOUR, EVERYONE ELSE...

WE SHOULD **GATHER.**

WE SHOULD MAKE OUR OWN DELEGATION.

INSTEAD OF THESE LITTLE FACTIONS OF HEROES AND MUTANTS WE'VE CONCOCTED, RUNNING AROUND DOING THE BEST THEY CAN--

--MAYBE WE COULD POOL ALL OF OUR RESOURCES AND ALL OF OUR INFORMATION AND DO IT RIGHT.

NO.

WELL, THANKS FOR THINKING ABOUT IT.

YOU CAN'T EVEN CONTROL THE GROUPS YOU'RE ALREADY IN.

HOW ON EARTH COULD YOU HOPE TO CONTROL THEM AS A LARGER BODY?

THAT'S WHAT WE'RE HERE TO DISCUSS.

NO.

THOUGH NAMOR ALWAYS FINDS THE *RUDEST* WAY TO SAY IT, HE MAY BE RIGHT. IT'S TOO BIG.

IT'S TOO HARD TO DECIDE WHO WOULD *BE* IN THIS COALITION. WHO *DECIDES* WHO'S IN IT?

WHO *RUNS* IT? WHO WOULD IT *ANSWER* TO?

HMM. I AGREE.

LOOK AT HOW MUCH THE U.N. ACTUALLY GETS DONE VERSUS HOW MUCH TIME THEY SPEND JUST RUNNING THE U.N.

THE BEST SUPER HEROES IN THE WORLD WOULD BE SPENDING ALL OF THEIR TIME DEALING WITH BUREAUCRACY? I DON'T SEE IT.

I THINK, IF I MAY...

THE SKRULLS TRIED TO TURN THE PUBLIC AGAINST YOU. AND THEY CAME CLOSE.

IT'S A NEW FEELING FOR YOU, THAT KIND OF ANIMOSITY, AM I RIGHT?

WELL, YES.

AS MUTANTS...WE FEEL WHAT YOU'RE FEELING RIGHT NOW...EVERY DAY.

ALL DAY.

I KNOW EXACTLY HOW YOU FEEL.

AND YOU WANT TO TURN THAT FEELING INTO SOMETHING-- SOMETHING *POSITIVE*-- AND THAT'S *NOBLE*.

BUT THIS IDEA...

BUT DON'T YOU SEE...?

A UNIFIED GROUPING OF HEROES THAT **INCLUDED** MUTANTS COULD SMASH DOWN BARRIERS...

...INSTILL **TRUST** IN MUTANTS ALL AROUND THE WORLD.

WE COULD **CHAMPION** YOUR CAUSE AND AT THE SAME TIME...

IT WOULD DO THE OPPOSITE.

THEY WOULD LUMP US IN ***WITH*** THE MUTANTS AND HAVE AN EXCUSE TO HATE US ***ALL***.

NO OFFENSE, PROFESSOR.

NO.

AND AS IT IS, MOST HEROES, NOT YOU OR THE FANTASTIC FOUR--BUT ***MOST*** HEROES...LIKE SPIDER-MAN, DAREDEVIL...

...THEY ARE REBELS. COUNTER-CULTURE.

WE'RE NOT ***ANTI***-ESTABLISHMENT, BUT WE'RE NOT ESTABLISHMENT.

WE'RE COUNTER-ESTABLISHMENT.

I JUST THINK IT'S WORTH A TRY. IT'S WORTH DISCUSSING.

WE CAN MAKE THE WORLD **BETTER** THAN IT IS. WE CAN DO **MORE** THAN WHAT WE'RE DOING.

I WANT TO DO MORE.

YOU'RE A ***FOOL***, AND HERE'S WHY.

HOW MANY CONVICTED ***CRIMINALS*** AND SUPPOSED EX-MUTANT ***TERRORISTS*** DO YOU HAVE ON THE AVENGERS ***RIGHT NOW?***

THE SCARLET WITCH, QUICKSILVER, HAWKEYE, WHO ***ELSE?***

HOW MANY QUESTIONABLE CHARACTERS HAVE YOU HAD ON THE TEAM ALL TOGETHER?

EXACTLY HOW DO YOU *SCREEN* THESE MUTANT STUDENTS YOU TAKE IN AT YOUR SCHOOL, XAVIER??

I HEAR RUMORS OF A MUTANT *ASSASSIN* WORKING FOR CANADIAN SECRET SERVICES.

WOULD YOU ALLOW *HIM* ON YOUR TEAM?

WASN'T BLACK BOLT'S *BROTHER* AN ARCHITECT OF THIS KREE INVASION OF EARTH?

ISN'T THAT WHAT WE'VE HEARD?

HAVE YOU *KILLED* THIS MAN FOR HIS CRIMES, OR IS HE IN YOUR CASTLE RIGHT NOW?

AND YOU WANT TO SHINE A SPOTLIGHT ON *ALL OF THIS?*

YOU THINK YOU CAN PUT THESE PEOPLE UP AS *ROLE MODELS* AND *DELEGATES* FOR THE ENTIRE PLANET EARTH?

THAT IS *COMPLETELY* DELUDED.

UM...

...YOU ARE RIGHT ABOUT ONE THING, IRON MAN.

THE INFORMATION.

WE ALL HAD PIECES OF INFORMATION-- LITTLE PIECES OF THE KREE-SKRULL SITUATION BEFORE IT ESCALATED.

WE *COULD* HAVE DEALT WITH IT SOONER HAD WE MET.

A MEETING JUST LIKE THIS COULD HAVE SAVED A LOT OF PEOPLES' LIVES--

SO WE MEET *PRIVATELY.* LIKE THIS.

FOR THE *BIG* THINGS.

I COULD SEE MYSELF TRUSTING THE PEOPLE IN THIS ROOM.

BUT!!!

NO ONE COULD KNOW WE DO THIS. I DON'T TRUST YOUR SO-CALLED--

YES, WE GET IT!

YOU DON'T TRUST OUR TEAMMATES. WE *UNDERSTAND.*

NO FAMILY.

NO WIVES.

NO ONE.

IF ONE OF YOU SHARED A SECRET OF MY ATLANTIS THAT CAME BACK TO HARM ANYONE IN MY KINGDOM, THE HELL I WOULD BRING TO THIS SURFACE WORLD...

WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS READY TO ATTACK US?

YOU'D TEAM WITH MAGNETO WHEN IT SUITS YOU, BUT YOU CAN'T HAVE A CIVIL CONVERSATION WITH US WITHOUT THREATENING--

IT'S NOT A THREAT.

IT'S NOT APPROPRIATE TO THE CONVERSATION, NAMOR.

THIS IS **BIGGER** THAN US.

IF THE KREE OR SKRULL EMPIRES TAKE THIS PLANET, THEY TAKE YOU TOO.

SO STOP PUFFING YOUR CHEST AND CONTRIBUTE TO THIS CONVERSATION.

AND THE ONLY REASON THEY **DIDN'T** WIN **THIS** TIME WAS SHEER LUCK.

WE DIDN'T **BEAT** THEM. WE JUST **STOPPED** IT. FOR HOW LONG? WHO KNOWS?

BUT A CHILD WITH A FIFTH GRADE HISTORY BOOK COULD FIGURE OUT THAT IT'S **GOING TO HAPPEN AGAIN**, AND WE'RE THE ONLY ONES WHO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF DOING ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

SO WE'D BE ON AN HONOR SYSTEM?

WELL, NO.

WE HAVE CHARLES XAVIER. YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM THE MOST POWERFUL PSYCHIC ON THE PLANET.

HE'D KNOW IF ANYONE HERE BETRAYED US. RIGHT?

I'M NOT COMFORTABLE WITH THAT. THAT'S NOT WHAT I DO.

BUT...

...IT IS...

IT WOULD HAVE TO BE UNANIMOUS.

THOSE IN FAVOR?

T'CHALLA...

I'M TELLING YOU NOW: END THIS.

WALK AWAY FROM THIS TABLE AND GO HOME.

WOW, T'CHALLA--

THERE IS A REASON THE SKRULLS HAD SUCH AN *EASY* TIME TRYING TO TURN THE WORLD *AGAINST* ITS HEROES.

BECAUSE DEEP DOWN EVERYONE KNOWS THAT *THIS* COULD HAPPEN, AND NOW IT HAS.

YOU JUST DECIDED *ALL BY YOURSELVES* THAT YOU ARE THE EARTH'S PROTECTORS.

AND THAT YOU, AND *ONLY* YOU, NOT YOUR TEAMMATES OR FAMILY, ARE TRUSTWORTHY ENOUGH TO INCLUDE IN THE PROCESS...

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DISAGREE?

WHEN ONE OF THESE EARTH-CHANGING MOMENTS FINDS YOU ALL AT ODDS WITH EACH OTHER, HERE IN A SECRET MEETING?

WHAT HAPPENS THEN?

WALK AWAY NOW.

WELL...

I ACTUALLY THINK IT'S ONE OF THE BEST IDEAS I'VE EVER HEARD.

I'LL TALK TO HIM.

IF IT DOESN'T WORK, WE *DO* WALK AWAY.

BLACK BOLT? I KNOW IF YOU SPEAK OUT LOUD YOU COULD BRING THIS ENTIRE COUNTRY DOWN AROUND OUR EARS...

CAN YOU READ HIS THOUGHTS, PROFESSOR? I'D LIKE TO HEAR WHAT HE'S THINKING.

HE SAYS HIS PEOPLE, THE INHUMANS, *DO* NEED THE CONNECTION TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD AND CAN TRUST NO GOVERNMENT.

THIS IS PERFECT FOR HIM AS HE FIGURES OUT WHAT THE NEXT STEP IS FOR HIS PEOPLE.

SO WE **AGREE** THEN. WHEN NEXT WE MEET, ANYTHING DISCUSSED HERE...

STAYS HERE.

I RARELY LEAVE MY HOUSE AS IT IS.

ANYTHING ELSE WE WANT TO TALK ABOUT NOW BEFORE T'CHALLA'S GUARDS HAVE US REMOVED?

ACTUALLY...

I'D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT AN ISLAND IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC...

IT'S CALLED KRAKOA.

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA
ONE MONTH AGO

HULK SMASH!!

WELCOME TO FABULOUS LAS VEGAS NEVADA

S.H.I.E.L.D. HELICARRIER, 1000 FEET OVER AKRON, OHIO

HOW MANY THIS TIME, COMMANDER HILL?

26. TWO KIDS AND A DOG.

HE CAN'T CONTROL IT.

WHO DO YOU THINK HAD *MORE* CONTROL OVER WHAT HAPPENED? THE 26 PEOPLE AND THE DOG, OR HIM?

THE THING I WANT TO KNOW IS...WHY DO YOU LET THIS CONTINUE?

ME?

LET?

ONE OF MY AGENTS WAS GOING OVER A REPORT AND HE SAID TO ME--

--YOU KNOW ALL THOSE PEOPLE NORMAN OSBORN KILLED AS THE GREEN GOBLIN? WHEN DOES IT BECOME *SPIDER-MAN'S* FAULT?

AND I SAID, *WHY* WOULD IT BE *SPIDER-MAN'S* FAULT?

HE SAID, *SPIDER-MAN'S* THE ONE WHO HAS OSBORN BY THE THROAT THREE TIMES A YEAR, BUT HE NEVER *DOES* WHAT HE HAS TO DO.

HE WEBS HIM UP, THEY THROW HIM IN JAIL, THEN OSBORN BREAKS OUT AND HE GOES ON ANOTHER HOMICIDAL RAMPAGE...

HOW MANY TIMES DOES THAT HAVE TO HAPPEN BEFORE THE WHOLE DAMN THING BECOMES SPIDER-MAN'S FAULT?

I SAID, IT'S NOT *SPIDER-MAN'S* FAULT NORMAN OSBORN IS NUTS.

HE SAID, THAT'S TRUE, BUT--IT *IS* HIS FAULT THE GUY'S STILL ALIVE.

COMMANDER...

I'M DOING EVERYTHING I CAN TO STOP THE HULK.

MY QUESTION IS, ARE YOU?

AND I GOTTA TELL YOU...

THE RUMBLINGS I'M HEARING ON CAPITOL HILL...

...THEY ARE LOOKING FOR THINGS TO BLAME ON YOU GUYS.

HYDROBASE, THE AVENGERS' FORMER BASE OF OPERATIONS.

INNOCENT PEOPLE ARE DYING BECAUSE HE WALKS THE EARTH.

INNOCENT PEOPLE DIE EVERY DAY, TONY.

SO IT'S OKAY, REED?

NO, I'M SAYING THAT THERE IS A NATURAL ORDER OF--

ONE MINUTE BRUCE BANNER IS YOUR ALLY AND THE NEXT YOU WANT TO SHOOT HIM INTO SPACE??!!

NAMOR, THAT'S NOT--

BECAUSE ONE MINUTE HE'S UNDER CONTROL AND A HERO, AND THE NEXT, LAS VEGAS IS DESTROYED!!

HE CAN'T CONTROL IT.

YOU USED TO HAVE QUITE THE DRINKING PROBLEM. MAYBE WE SHOULD THROW YOU INTO THE SUN?

IT'S NOT THE SAME THING, AND I NEVER KILLED ANYONE.

HOW DO YOU KNOW?

WHAT DO YOUR PEOPLE CALL THEM? BLACKOUTS??

HE'S A PROBLEM. AND WE HAVE A SOLUTION.

AND NO ONE GETS HURT.

MAYBE IF YOU AND "DOCTOR" REED RICHARDS HERE TOOK A MINUTE AWAY FROM YOUR TALK SHOW APPEARANCES AND MEETINGS ABOUT YOUR ACTION FIGURES AND SPENT SOME TIME TRYING TO CURE HIM WITH YOUR LOFTY SCIENTIFIC ACUMEN--

HOW DARE YOU, NAMOR? REALLY?

HOW DARE YOU?!!

I HAVE SPENT COUNTLESS HOURS TRYING TO CRACK THE GENETIC SEQUENCE THAT TURNED BANNER INTO THE HULK.

NOT ONLY TO CURE HIM BUT TO CURE MY FRIEND BEN GRIMM AS WELL.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE THAT YOU COME HERE AND SPEAK TO US LIKE THIS??

IF YOU KNEW THE FIRST THING ABOUT THE GENETIC SCIENCES, YOU'D KNOW IT WOULD TAKE A MILLION SCIENTISTS WITH A MILLION COMPUTERS A THOUSAND YEARS TO CRACK EVERY GENETIC SEQUENCE THAT MAKES THIS PLANET WORK, AND BANNER'S ISN'T EVEN ONE OF THEM!!!

I HAVE MET WITH EVERY GREAT MIND ALIVE ON THIS PLANET TO FIND SOME SORT OF CURE!

OR AT THE VERY LEAST, SOME SORT OF INVENTION WE COULD USE TO DAMPEN HIM!!

AND DOCTOR STRANGE HAS--

YES.

HE'S TRAVELED THE ENTIRE ASTRAL PLANE LOOKING FOR ANYTHING, ANYTHING AT ALL THAT COULD--

I TRIED TO BANISH HIM ONCE, TO THE CROSSROADS, BUT IT WASN'T AS SAFE AS THIS.

AND WE'VE SAT BANNER DOWN WITH XAVIER.

AND WHAT DID WE LEARN?

IF HE COULD KILL HIMSELF, HE WOULD HAVE, LONG AGO.

AND STILL I AM NOT TALKING ABOUT KILLING HIM!!

I'M TALKING ABOUT SENDING HIM AWAY!!

THIS *ISN'T* ABOUT BANNER!! THIS IS ABOUT WANDA MAXIMOFF, THE SCARLET WITCH!!

YOU'RE GOING TO *PUNISH* BANNER FOR WHAT *SHE* DID TO *YOU* AND YOUR *AVENGERS!*

YOU COULDN'T CONTROL *HER*, SO YOU'RE GOING TO *PUNISH* HIM!!!

NAMOR, THAT REALLY IS--

AND I'M TELLING YOU PEOPLE NOW, IF THIS CONVERSATION CONTINUES--!

THOSE IN FAVOR?

4

NAMOR--

I'M WARNING YOU RIGHT NOW! IF ONE MOVE IS MADE TOWARDS HIM...I'M GOING TO--

NAMOR!

THE PROBLEM WITH YOU IS--YOU ACT LIKE YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE HERE WILLING TO FIGHT FOR WHAT HE BELIEVES IN.

WE'RE **ALL** WARRIORS. WE'RE **ALL** WILLING.

NO, YOU'RE A WARRIOR.

I'M A KING.

NOT UP HERE, YOU'RE NOT.

BOOM

NAMOR!!

NO!!

UNHAND ME!

NAMOR!

ESHHAAMM

ESHHAAMM

STOP RESISTING MY ENCHANTMENTS, NAMOR!!

YOU KNOW BETTER!!

UNBELIEVABLE, NAMOR!!

JUST COMPLETELY AMAZING TO ME HOW YOU NEVER CHANGE.

AND YOU'RE FOOLS, COMPLETE FOOLS!!!

ALL OF YOU!!

COFF!!

COFF COFF!!

THE GROUP HAS VOTED.

YOU'VE KNOWN HIM YOUR WHOLE LIFE, STRANGE.

AND I WANT HIM TO BE *HAPPY!*

BANNER WILL COME BACK FROM WHENCE YOU SEND HIM AND HE WILL *KILL YOU ALL!*

AND HE'LL BE RIGHT!

LET HIM GO...

KING T'CHALLA WAS RIGHT, TOO.

COFF!

IT'S A SATELLITE. I HELPED DESIGN IT...

I DON'T THINK BANNER COULD KNOW THAT NICK FURY'S GONE UNDERGROUND...

BUT HE *WILL* LISTEN TO FURY. HE WOULDN'T TRUST THE NEW PEOPLE IN CHARGE OF S.H.I.E.L.D.

S.H.I.E.L.D. HAS BEEN USING A LIFE MODEL DECOY TO STAND IN FOR FURY, TO COVER UP HIS DISAPPEARANCE.

THE NEW ONES ARE STAGGERINGLY LIFELIKE.

THE LMD COAXES BANNER TO GO UP TO A SATELLITE THAT'S GONE HAYWIRE.

WE *ARE* HAVING TROUBLE WITH THE A.I. ON THIS SATELLITE, AND IT IS SOMETHING THAT NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED.

BUT, IF WE DO THIS RIGHT, AS FAR AS *BRUCE* WILL BE CONCERNED, IT'LL BE A JOB ONLY *THE HULK* CAN DO.

WE JUST NEED HIM TO GET INSIDE.

AND FROM THERE, THE A.I. CAN DISTRACT HIM WHILE WE SEND IT WHERE HE CAN'T HURT ANYONE AND NO ONE CAN HURT HIM.

I'M SORRY, BRUCE.

BUT FOR YOUR SAKE AND OURS, WE'RE SENDING YOU AWAY. IT'S THE ONLY WAY WE CAN BE SURE.

AND MAYBE ONE DAY HE'LL FORGIVE US.

NNNOOOOOO!!

FUNTIME, INC. A STARK ENTERPRISES SUBSIDIARY TODAY.

FUNTIME IN

THEY'RE NOT COMING.

APPROACHING.

GENTLEMEN?

THANK YOU FOR COMING.

DOCTOR STRANGE IS ON HIS WAY.

XAVIER'S BEEN MISSING SINCE THE HOUSE OF M.

XAVIER STILL MISSING?

AND WE ASSUME THE WORST?

IT WOULD BE NAÏVE NOT TO.

WELL THEN, BRAVO TO ALL OF YOU FOR ANOTHER DISASTER AVERTED.

WHY ARE YOU EVEN *HERE*, NAMOR?

HE WAS INVITED.

I KNOW WE AGREED NOT TO DO THIS ANY MORE. BUT SOMETHING LARGER THAN ANY ISSUES **WE** HAVE IS ON THE HORIZON...

... AND IF I DIDN'T COME TO YOU WITH IT I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO LIVE WITH MYSELF.

THIS IS AN EARLY DRAFT OF A BILL THAT WILL HIT THE FLOOR OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS IN A MONTH OR TWO.

IT WAS SLIPPED TO ME UNDER THE TABLE.

IT'S THE SUPER HERO REGISTRATION ACT.

ANYONE WITH POWERS--ANYONE IN COSTUME--ANY MUTANT--

--ANY OF **OUR** KIND IS GOING TO BE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REVEAL THEMSELVES TO THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.

IN RETURN, THE REGISTERED HERO WILL BE GIVEN A JOB AS A GUARD IN THE NEW S.H.I.E.L.D. WORLD SECURITY FORCE. YOU WILL STILL GET TO BE A SUPER HERO, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO ANSWER TO SOMEONE.

REFUSING TO DO SO WILL BE CONSIDERED A FEDERAL CRIME.

THE FEELING IS THAT OTHER COUNTRIES WILL FOLLOW SUIT.

BUT THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL BE LEADING THE WAY AND THAT THIS BILL WILL PASS.

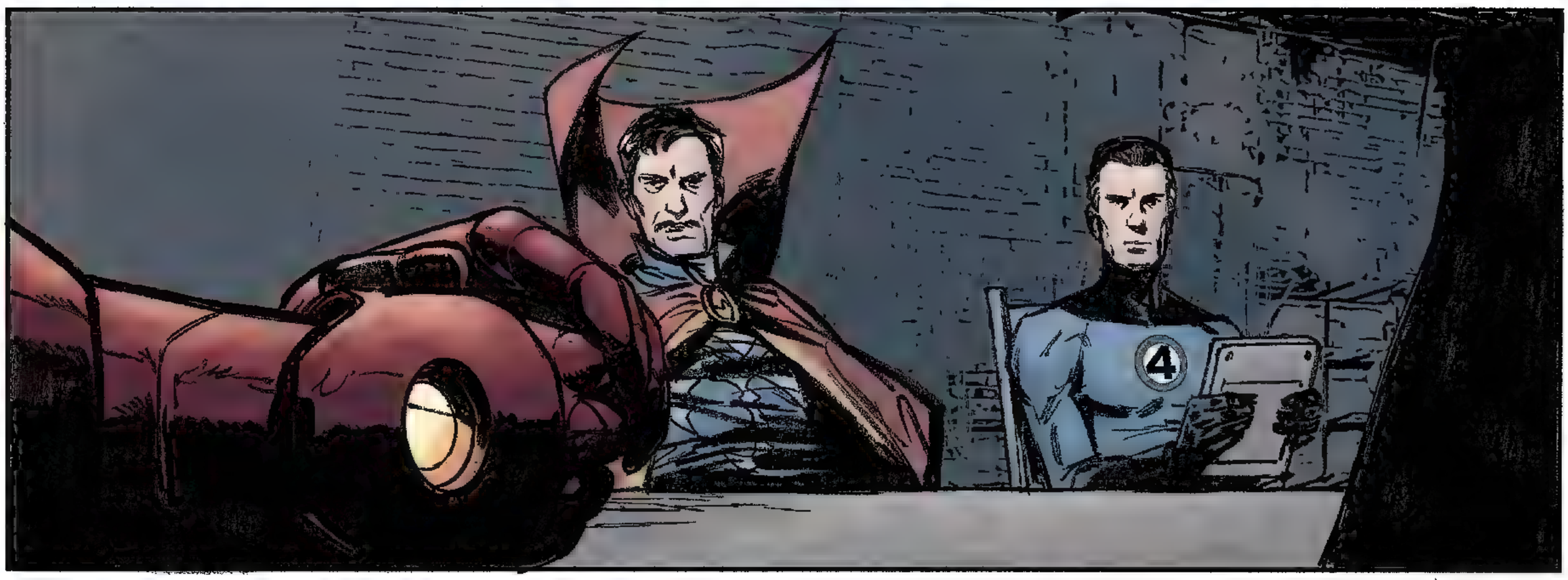
IF A PERSON WEARS A MASK, HOW WILL THEY KNOW WHO TO--?

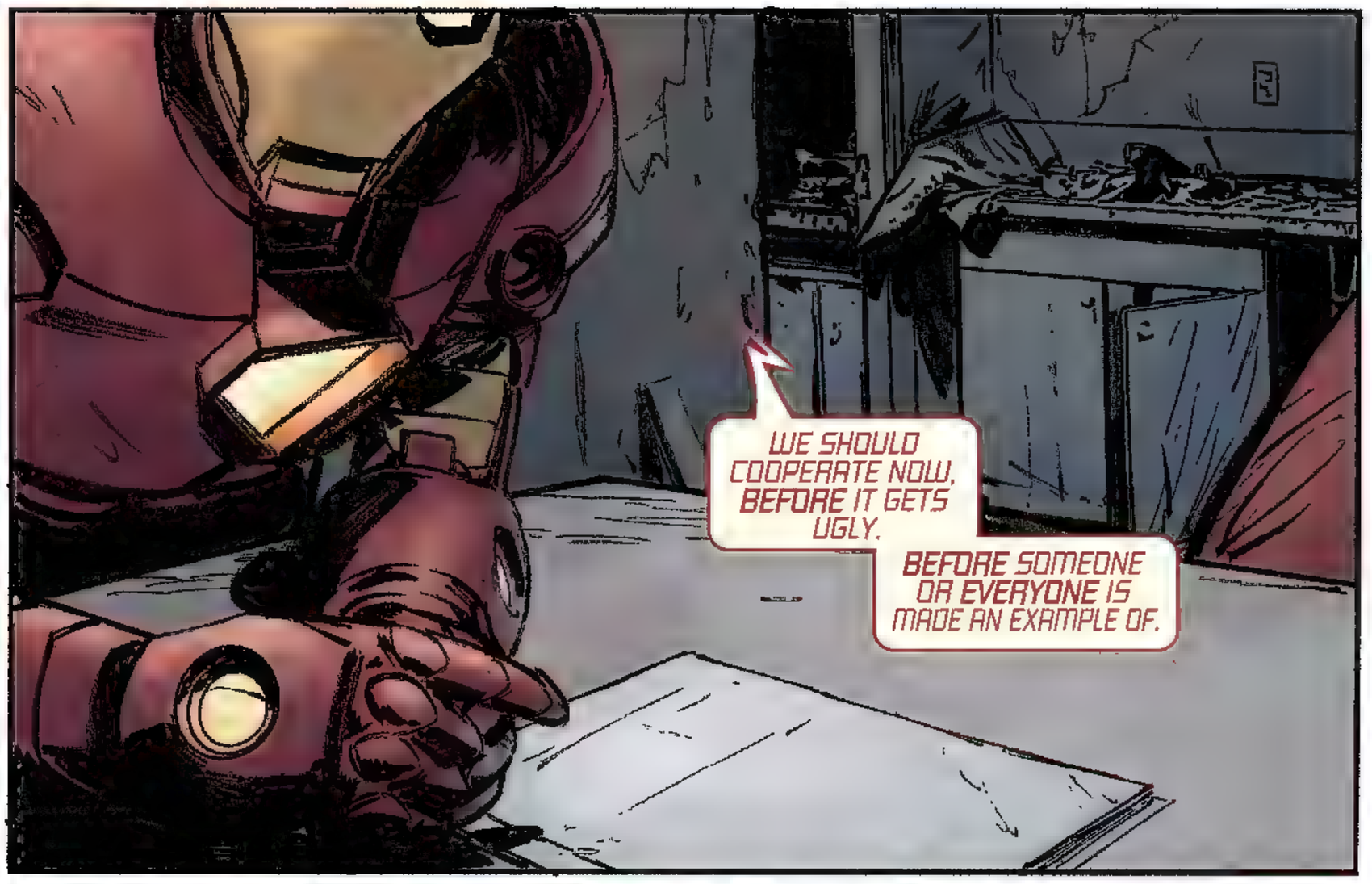
S.H.I.E.L.D. IS DEVELOPING A SPECIAL UNIT TO HUNT DOWN ANYONE FLAGRANTLY DISOBEYING THE LAW.

WELL, THAT'S JUST DISGUSTING.

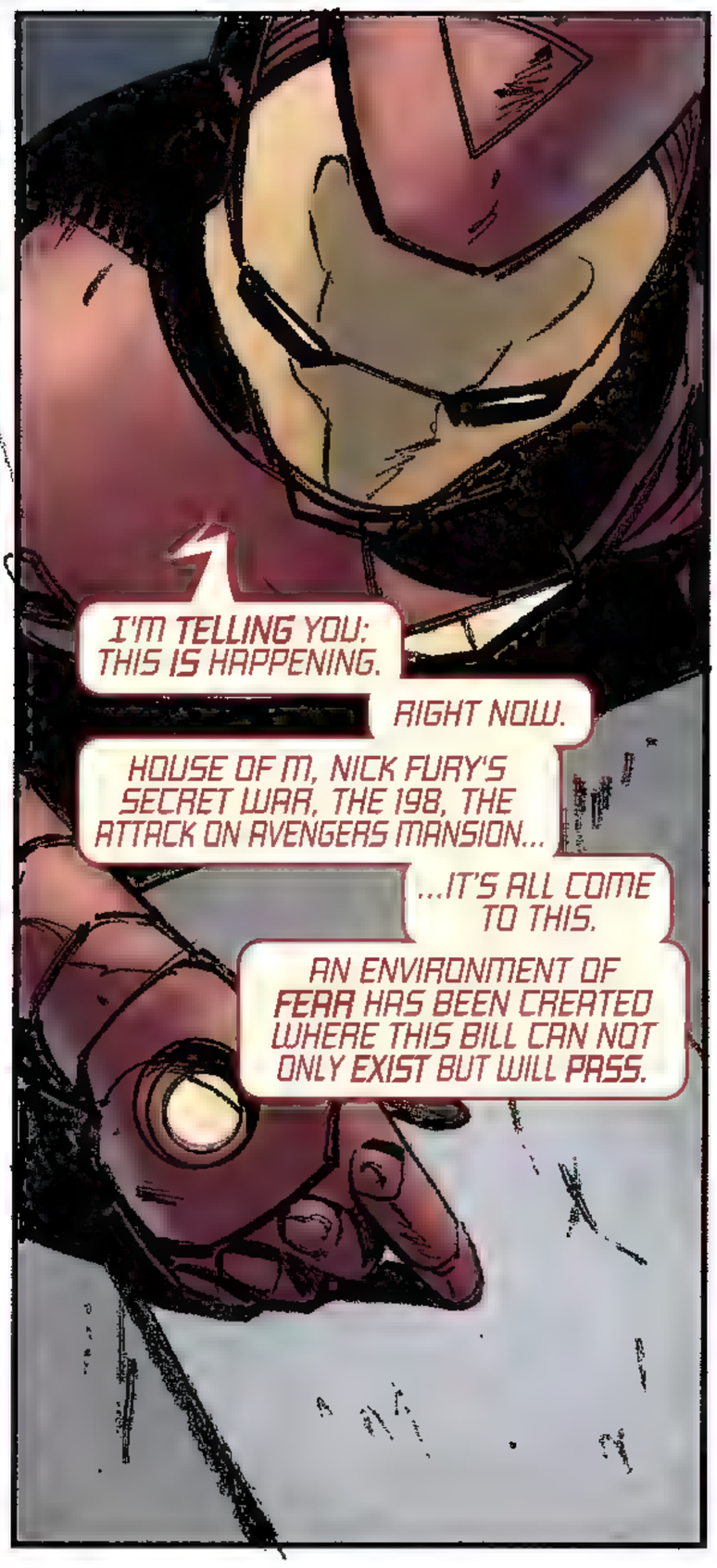
AND I THINK WE SHOULD ALL VOLUNTARILY SUPPORT AND OBEY THIS ACT BEFORE IT EVEN GOES TO A VOTE.

WE SHOULD HAPPILY COME OUT IN FAVOR OF IT.




WE SHOULD COOPERATE NOW, BEFORE IT GETS UGLY.
BEFORE SOMEONE OR EVERYONE IS MADE AN EXAMPLE OF.

FIRST YOU TOOK CARE OF THE HULK...
...AND NOW YOU FOUND A WAY TO TAKE CARE OF THE REST OF US.


I'M TELLING YOU: THIS IS HAPPENING.
RIGHT NOW.
HOUSE OF M, NICK FURY'S SECRET WAR, THE 198, THE ATTACK ON AVENGERS MANSION...
...IT'S ALL COME TO THIS.
AN ENVIRONMENT OF FEAR HAS BEEN CREATED WHERE THIS BILL CAN NOT ONLY EXIST BUT WILL PASS.

AND YOU... WILL GLADLY ROLL OVER.
NAMOR, LISTEN...
I WANT TO EXPLAIN THIS TO YOU AS CLEARLY AS I CAN...

I'M A FUTURIST.

THE WAY MY MIND WORKS--THE WAY REED'S MIND WORKS--WE CAN INTUIT THE FUTURE.

THAT'S WHY WE'RE SUCH SUCCESSFUL INVENTORS. WE KNOW WHAT PEOPLE WILL NEED **BEFORE** PEOPLE EVEN KNOW THEY'RE GOING TO **NEED** IT.

AND NOW I'M GOING TO TELL YOU THE FUTURE.

A HERO, PROBABLY A YOUNG ONE...

...ONE OF THE YOUNG AVENGERS, OR THOSE KIDS IN LOS ANGELES...

...SOME CAREFREE, HAPPY-GO-LUCKY, WELL-MEANING YOUNG PERSON, WITH THE **BEST** OF INTENTIONS, WILL DO SOMETHING **WRONG.**

HE'LL BE TRYING TO SAVE SOMEONE--DO SOMETHING HEROIC--BUT HE'LL MAKE A **MISTAKE.**

TURN TO THE LEFT INSTEAD OF THE RIGHT -- AND PEOPLE WILL BE HURT OR KILLED BECAUSE OF IT.

AND IT'LL EITHER HAPPEN ON LIVE TV, OR IT'LL BE RECORDED... AND, LIKE RODNEY KING, IT'LL PLAY OVER AND OVER AND OVER...

ALL OVER THE WORLD.

UNTIL...

...THE UNREST THAT IS **ALREADY** BUBBLING WILL **BOIL** OVER...

...AND EVERY POLITICIAN LOOKING TO MAKE A NAME FOR HIMSELF WILL RUN RIGHT ON TV AND THEY'LL TELL AMERICA HOW THEY ARE GOING TO **SAVE THE WORLD** FROM THESE **OUT-OF-CONTROL** COSTUMED CHARACTERS WHO THINK THE LAW DOESN'T APPLY TO THEM.

AND HALF OF US WILL GO ALONG WITH IT AND HALF OF US WON'T.

AND BECAUSE OF THIS MINI-REBELLION, OUR LAWMAKERS WILL BE FORCED TO MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF SOMEONE.

SOMEONE LIKE OUR FRIEND **SPIDER-MAN.**

SOMEONE THEY CAN MAKE A REAL SPECTACLE OF.

SOMEONE THEY CAN UNMASK ON TV, DESTROY HIS MARRIAGE AND FAMILY AND PIN A CRIME OR TWO ON!

ALL FOR THE WHOLE WORLD TO SEE.

AND THE COUNTRY **WILL** RUPTURE.

SIDES WILL BE TAKEN AND PEOPLE **WILL** GET HURT.

FRIEND AGAINST FRIEND. PEOPLE WHO USED TO BE ADVERSARIES FINDING THEMSELVES TEAMED UP AGAINST A COMMON CAUSE.

FRIENDS **DYING** AT THE HANDS OF A FORMER ALLY OR TEAMMATE.

THAT IS WHAT **WILL** HAPPEN.

BUT IF WE COME TO THEM NOW AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MOST POWERFUL OF ALL THE HEROES...

...COOPERATE AND INCORPORATE OURSELVES INTO THE PROCESS...

...WE CAN DIFFUSE IT.

CAN I HEAR THE PART WHERE YOU TELL US THAT IF WE WOULD HAVE CREATED THIS DELEGATION OF HEROES YOU FANTASIZED ABOUT YEARS AGO, NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE EVER HAPPENED?

YES.

YOU SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO ME THEN, AND I'M BEGGING YOU TO LISTEN TO ME NOW.

YOU BROUGHT IT ON YOURSELVES. THIS IS A SURFACE WORLD SITUATION.

THEY'LL COME FOR YOU IN ATLANTIS, TOO.

NO. THAT WOULD BE AN ACT OF WAR.

MOST PROBABLY YOU'LL DESTROY YOURSELVES BEFORE THEY EVEN CONSIDER US...

AND IT'LL BE OUR PLANET AGAIN.

EITHER WAY, WE'RE FINE WITH IT.

UM...

...ITS WRONG.

DOCTOR.

ITS WRONG.

IT'S GIVING IN TO OTHER PEOPLES' IGNORANCE AND FEAR.

AND A *LOT* OF OUR PEERS WILL FIGHT FOR THEIR RIGHTS.

TO THE DEATH.

DOCTOR RICHARDS, PLEASE TELL ME YOU--

TONY'S RIGHT.

MY GOD.

HE'S COMPLETELY RIGHT.

I GUESS WE'RE DONE HERE.

NEVER CALL UPON ME AGAIN.

WELL.

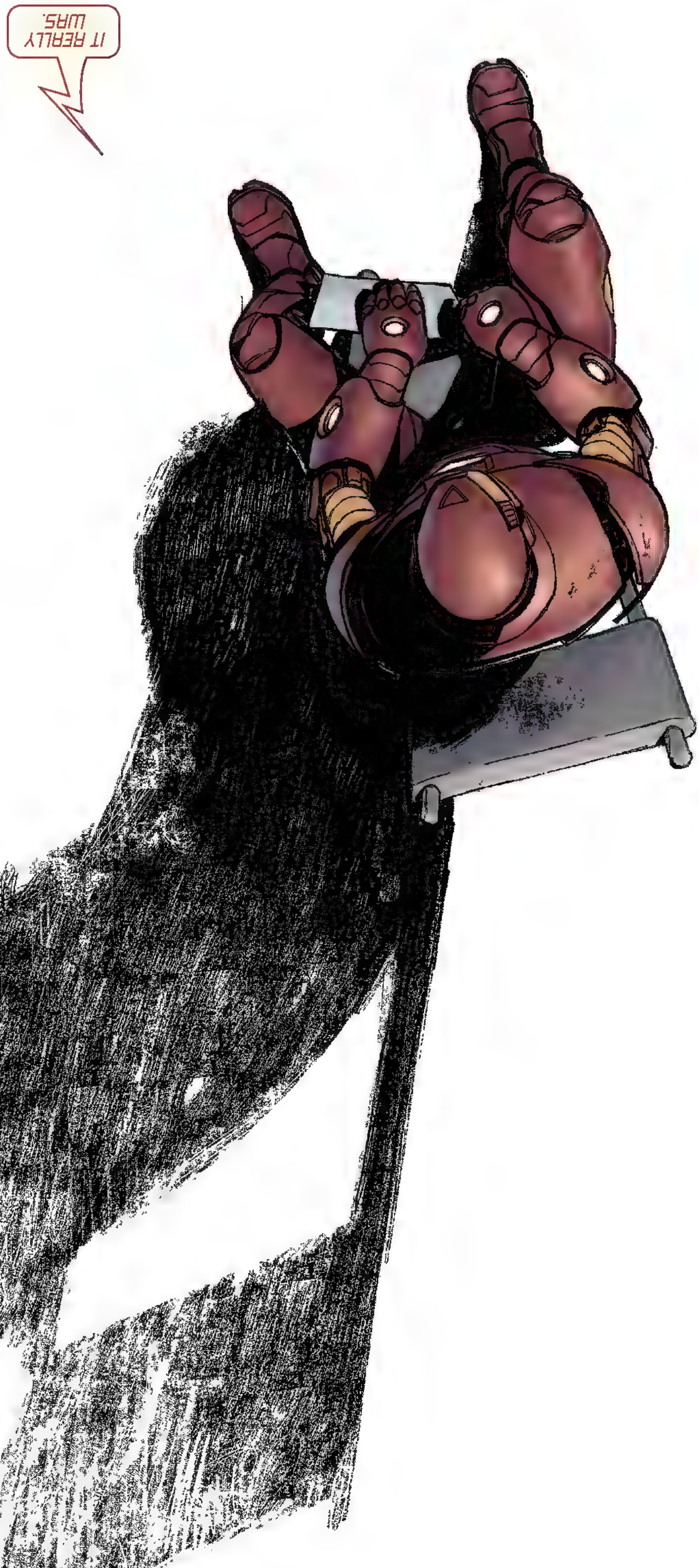
I'M SORRY YOU CAN'T COMMUNICATE WITH US, BLACK BOLT. I--

I THINK I GOT THE GIST.

I'LL CALL YOU AS SOON AS I HEAR SOMETHING.

WELL, I HAVE TO GO HOME AND FIGHT WITH MY WIFE ABOUT THIS FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

IT WAS FUN WHILE IT LASTED.


IT REALLY WAS.

FANTASTIC FOUR #536

PROLOGUE...

SIX MONTHS AGO...

THE SOUTHEAST TRAIL WAS FIRST DETECTED AT 5:07 A.M. PST BY SIX OF THE FORTY-SEVEN UNMANNED RADAR SITES THAT COMPRISE THE NORTH WARNING SYSTEM, WHICH PROVIDES EARLY WARNING SURVEILLANCE OF OBJECTS ENTERING NORTH AMERICAN AIRSPACE.

AFTERWARD, ASTRONOMERS AT THE KITT PEAK OBSERVATORY IN TUCSON CONFIRMED THAT THERE WERE NO IDENTIFIED COMETS OR INCOMING METEORS THAT COULD HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SIGHTING.

NEITHER THE NORTH AMERICAN AIR DEFENSE COMMAND, NOR THE EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY, BOTH OF WHICH TRACK SATELLITE AND OTHER ORBITAL DEBRIS, WERE ABLE TO LINK THE OBJECT TO ANY CATALOGUED SPACE JUNK.

ALL PARTIES INVOLVED KNEW ONLY TWO THINGS.

FIRST, THAT THE OBJECT WAS ONLY A COUPLE OF FEET IN SIZE, TOO SMALL TO DO ANY SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE, AND WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BURN UP ON RE-ENTRY.

SECOND, THAT IF THE OBJECT DID SURVIVE ENTRY, IT WAS PROJECTED TO LAND IN A RELATIVELY EMPTY STRETCH OF LAND IN OKLAHOMA.

EN ROUTE TO ITS FINAL DESTINATION, THE OBJECT'S TRAJECTORY INTERSECTED A SMALL PRIVATE PLANE THAT HAD DEPARTED THE SEATTLE-TACOMA AIRPORT TWENTY MINUTES EARLIER, INBOUND TO LOS ANGELES.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTERWARD TO THE PLANE AND ITS PASSENGERS IS ANOTHER STORY, FOR ANOTHER TIME.

WHAT MATTERS, FOR NOW, IS THAT AT 5:37 A.M. PST AN OBJECT FELL FROM THE HEAVENS--

--AND CAME TO EARTH.

The HAMMER FALLS

SIX MONTHS LATER...

RIGHT NOW.

I DIDN'T HEAR YOU COME IN.

I DIDN'T WANT TO WAKE YOU.

OBVIOUSLY.

SO HOW DID IT GO?

CNN, AMERICA'S MOST TRUSTED NETWORK.

WELL, IT'S A LITTLE AFTER FOUR A.M. HERE IN ATLANTA, AND HERE ARE THE HEADLINES.

HOW DID IT GO?

YOU EVER NOTICE THAT YOU ALWAYS REPEAT MY QUESTION WHEN YOU WANT TO BUY TIME TO THINK OF A GOOD ANSWER?

I REPEAT YOUR QUESTIONS TO BUY TIME?

REED--

IT'S--I WAS JUST--

--TRFYING TR HAPH A THANDWITH.

ANSWERS FIRST, THEN FOOD.

REED, THIS ISN'T LIKE YOU WENT OUT BOWLING WITH THE BOYS. YOU SAID THIS WAS IMPORTANT.

IT WAS... IT IS.

SO? HOW DID IT GO?

HOW DID IT GO...?

WHY ARE YOU EVEN *HERE*, NAMOR?

HE WAS INVITED.

I KNOW WE AGREED NOT TO DO THIS ANY MORE, BUT SOMETHING LARGER THAN ANY ISSUES **WE** HAVE IS ON THE HORIZON...

... AND IF I DION'T COME TO YOU WITH IT, I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO LIVE WITH MYSELF.

THIS IS AN EARLY DRAFT OF A BILL THAT WILL HIT THE FLOOR OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS IN A MONTH OR TWO.

IT WAS SLIPPED TO ME UNDER THE TABLE.

IT'S THE SUPER HERO REGISTRATION ACT.

ANYONE WITH POWERS--ANYONE IN COSTUME--ANY MUTANT--

--ANY OF **OUR** KIND IS GOING TO BE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REVEAL THEMSELVES TO THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.

IN RETURN, THE REGISTERED HERO WILL BE GIVEN A JOB AS A GUARD IN THE NEW S.H.I.E.L.D. WORLD SECURITY FORCE. YOU WILL STILL GET TO BE A SUPER HERO, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO ANSWER TO SOMEONE.

REFUSING TO DO SO WILL BE CONSIDERED A FEDERAL CRIME.

THE FEELING IS THAT OTHER COUNTRIES WILL FOLLOW SUIT.

BUT THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL BE LEADING THE WAY AND THAT THIS BILL **WILL** PASS.

IF A PERSON WEARS A MASK, HOW WILL THEY KNOW WHO TO--?

S.H.I.E.L.D. IS DEVELOPING A SPECIAL UNIT TO HUNT DOWN ANYONE FLAGRANTLY DISOBEYING THE LAW.

WELL, THAT'S JUST DISGUSTING.

AND I THINK WE SHOULD ALL VOLUNTARILY SUPPORT AND OBEY THIS ACT BEFORE IT EVEN GOES TO A VOTE.

WE SHOULD HAPPILY COME OUT IN FAVOR OF IT.

FOR MORE ON THIS MYSTERIOUS MEETING, SEE THIS MONTH'S **NEW AVENGERS: ILLUMINATI SPECIAL!**

"WE SHOULD COOPERATE NOW, BEFORE IT GETS UGLY, BEFORE SOMEONE OR EVERYONE IS MADE AN EXAMPLE OF."

WE ALL AGREED THAT THERE ARE SOME...VERY BAD TIMES COMING.

AS FOR WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT, THERE WAS--

--WELL, LET'S JUST SAY THERE WAS SOME DISAGREEMENT.

BUT IN THE LONG RUN, I'M SURE WE'LL BE ABLE TO PUT OUR DIFFERENCES BEHIND US.

MEANWHILE, IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL--

--INDUSTRIALIST TONY STARK LEFT WASHINGTON LATE YESTERDAY AFTER TESTIFYING IN CLOSED SESSION BEFORE THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON SUPERHUMAN RELATIONS.

WHEN ASKED TO COMMENT ON SPECULATION ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A SUPERHUMAN REGISTRATION ACT IN LIGHT OF RECENT TRAGIC EVENTS, STARK WAS UNCHARACTERISTICALLY VAGUE.

THE COMMITTEE AND I HAD A GOOD MEETING, AND WE DISCUSSED SOME OPTIONS THAT, AS FAR AS I KNOW, ARE STILL JUST THAT... OPTIONS.

RIGHT, BOSS.

COME ON, PETER... WE HAVE PLACES TO BE.

THEY WOULDN'T... I MEAN, YOU DON'T THINK THE GOVERNMENT IS REALLY GOING TO--

SUE--

IT'S JUST ELECTION-YEAR POSTURING, THAT'S ALL. THEY WANT TO GET EVERYONE ON BOTH SIDES HEATED UP SO THEY'LL GO TO THE POLLS IN NOVEMBER.

IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE, I--

--CAN YOU READ US, REPEAT, DR. RICHARDS, CAN YOU READ US--

WHAT THE--?

THAT'S COMING IN ON THE EMERGENCY DISTRESS FREQUENCY I GAVE S.H.I.E.L.D....NOBODY ELSE IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE IT.

THIS IS DR. RICHARDS. IDENTIFY YOURSELF.

THANK GOD, DZZRICHARDS, WE NEEZZZZR HELP, GOT THIS FREQUENCYZZZOM S.H.I.E.L.D. HQ, THEY CAN'T GET HERE IN TIME--

THIS IS GENERAL WILLZZM RAY. EMERGENCY. YZZ'RE OURZZZPE. I SAY AGAIN, YOU'RE OUR ONLY HOPE.

NATZZZAL SECURITY... EMERGENCY... ONLY YOU CAN--

WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S HAPPENED?

TWO MINUTES, TEN SECONDS LATER.

BEN, UP AND AT 'EM. WE NEED TO BE IN THE AIR IN FIVE MINUTES.

FOUR MINUTES, FIFTY SECONDS.

...YER KIDDING ME....

IN THE AIR? WHERE'RE WE GOIN'?

OKLAHOMA.

OKLAHOMA...? WE'RE GOIN' TA *OKLAHOMA?*

ON *PURPOSE?*

THREE MINUTES THIRTY SECONDS.

"BUT THERE'S NUTHIN' *IN* OKLAHOMA."

PRIVATE PROPERTY
-NO TRESPASSING-
USE OF LETHAL FORCE
AUTHORIZED

"THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG, BEN--

"--DEAD WRONG."

SIR! GETTING REPORTS OF MORE ENEMY FORCES CLOSING AT NORTHWEST PERIMETER!

GET BRAVO UNIT OVER THERE *NOW!* WE HAVE TO KEEP THEM AWAY FROM THE DOME AT ALL COSTS!

SIR, FIELD COMMAND SAYS NOTHING SEEMS TO STOP THE INTRUDERS--

THAT'S BECAUSE THEY CAN'T *BE* STOPPED. NOT BY OUR FORCES, THAT'S FOR DAMNED SURE.

"S.H.I.E.L.D. CAN'T GET HERE IN TIME... SAME FOR CONVENTIONAL GROUND FORCES...BUT I'M NOT SURE IT WOULD MATTER, NOT AGAINST *THEM*--

"--NOT AGAINST DOOMBOTS."

STAND ASIDE FOR THE GLORY THAT IS DOOM!

STAND ASIDE FOR THE GLORY THAT IS DOOM!

STAND ASIDE FOR THE GLORY THAT IS DOOM!

DOOMBOTS? HAS TH' PROVISIONAL LATVERIAN GOVERNMENT LOST ITS MIND?

YEAH...STAGING AN ATTACK LIKE THIS ON AMERICAN SOIL SO SOON AFTER THE LAST TIME, THEY'VE GOT TO BE--

DESPERATE.

OR DETERMINED.

SO DETERMINED TO GET WHATEVER'S BEING STUDIED AT THAT RESEARCH INSTALLATION THAT THEY'D RISK REPROGRAMMING THEIR LEFTOVER DOOMBOTS IN ORDER TO ATTACK IT.

I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY WOULDN'T TELL YOU WHAT THEY'RE STUDYING DOWN THERE...

WE CAN DEAL WITH THAT LATER, SUE. RIGHT NOW--

--I'D SAY WE HAVE BIGGER FISH TO FRY.

AND ABOUT FREAKING TIME.

FLAME ON!

YEAH, YEAH, WHATEVER.

BETTER GET CLEAR, PALS, THIS IS BETWEEN ME AND THIS REJECT FROM TOYS-R-US.

I SHOULD HAVE EXPECTED YOU WOULD BE HERE, GRIMM.

WHUMP

GOOD, THEN LIKE THE KIDS SAY--

--LET'S GET THIS PARTY STARTED!

KER-WHAMMMMM!

YOU THERE! LIEUTENANT!

SIR!

WHERE'S GENERAL RAY?

IN THE COMMAND CENTER, SIR! I'LL GET HIM!

GOOD IDEA--

--BECAUSE I THINK WE'RE GOING TO BE A BIT TIED UP HERE FOR A WHILE.

THERE'S SO MANY, REED...IT LOOKS AS IF THEY'VE USED EVERY DOOMBOT THEY HAD LEFT FOR THIS ONE ASSAULT. WHATEVER THEY'RE AFTER--

FRUK

BACK OFF!

--IT MUST BE PRETTY IMPORTANT TO RISK ALL THIS.

FOOLISH, TO BELIEVE YOU COULD STAND BEFORE DOOM AND HIS--

--GOAL...?

A PALTRY DEFENSE THAT WILL HAVE NO LONG-TERM HOPE OF SAVING ANY OF YOU....

TWO DOWN, NOW TO--

--UNNNGGGHH!

YOUR EXCESSIVE CONFIDENCE HAS ALWAYS BEEN YOUR DOWNFALL, STORM.

YOU TALK PRETTY GOOD... FOR A PILE OF GEARS AND OLD MOTOR OIL.

ANY FINAL WORDS, INSECT?

HOW ABOUT A LITTLE *FIRE*, SCARECROW?

VWOOOSH

YEAH... JUST THIS...

ANY... FINAL...FINAL WORDS--

TAP-TAP

THANKS, BEN...THAT'LL BUY ME JUST ENOUGH TIME TO--

FLAME OFF!

WHAT THE...WHY'D YOU DO *THAT?*

WELL, YER ALWAYS ANNOUNCING WHEN YOUR FREAKING FLAME COMES ON, SO SHOULDN'T *SOME*BODY MAKE AN ANNOUNCEMENT WHEN YER OUTTA GAS?

YOU'RE SUCH A YUTZ.

HEY, I'M STILL WAITING FOR YA TA YELL *PUBERTY ON!*

HOWDY, FELLAS... SO IN THE FANCY HERO PHRASE BOOK, WHICH DO *YOU* PREFER?

FLAME ON, OR--

--IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!

TM, COPYRIGHTED, PATENT PENDING, SUPPLIES LIMITED, ORDER NOW, OFFER NOT VALID IN SOME STATES.

DR. RICHARDS...YOU HAVE *NO* IDEA HOW GLAD WE ARE TO SEE YOU. NOW WE'VE GOT A CHANCE TO--

I'M NOT SO SURE.

WHAT DO YOU--

I'M NOT SEEING MUCH OF A TACTICAL INTENT BEHIND THIS BATTLE.

INSTEAD OF DRIVING TOWARD THE BASE, THE LATVERIANS HAVE THEIR FORCES FIGHTING SKIRMISHES ON THE PERIMETER.

THERE MUST BE A PATTERN I'M NOT SEEING. CAN YOU GET ME A TACTICAL DISPLAY OF THE BATTLEFIELD?

NO CAN DO, DR. RICHARDS. WE LOST OUR GPS SYSTEM WHEN THE RADAR SYSTEM WAS BLOWN OUT.

WHAT?

THE FIRST WAVE TOOK *OUT* OUR MAJOR RADAR AND BATTLEFIELD IMAGING SYSTEMS.

ARE *ANY* OF THE SYSTEMS STILL WORKING?

NO...WE LOST THE LAST ONE ABOUT TWO MINUTES AGO.

OH, NO...

TELL YOUR MEN TO GET AS FAR FROM THE LAB AS POSSIBLE.

BUT--

NO!

DOWN! EVERYBODY DOWN!

BA-BOOM!

IS EVERYONE... IS EVERYONE ALL RIGHT?

I THINK SO, I--

THE LAB...THEY'VE DESTROYED THE WHOLE THING, LEAVING BEHIND JUST A CRATER.

NOT ENTIRELY CORRECT, DR. RICHARDS.

THAT VOICE--!

WHAT IS IN THAT CRATER FELL FROM THE SKY SIX MONTHS AGO...THOUGH IT TOOK MY SOURCES WITHIN YOUR GOVERNMENT MONTHS TO PROVIDE ME WITH THE EXACT COORDINATES.

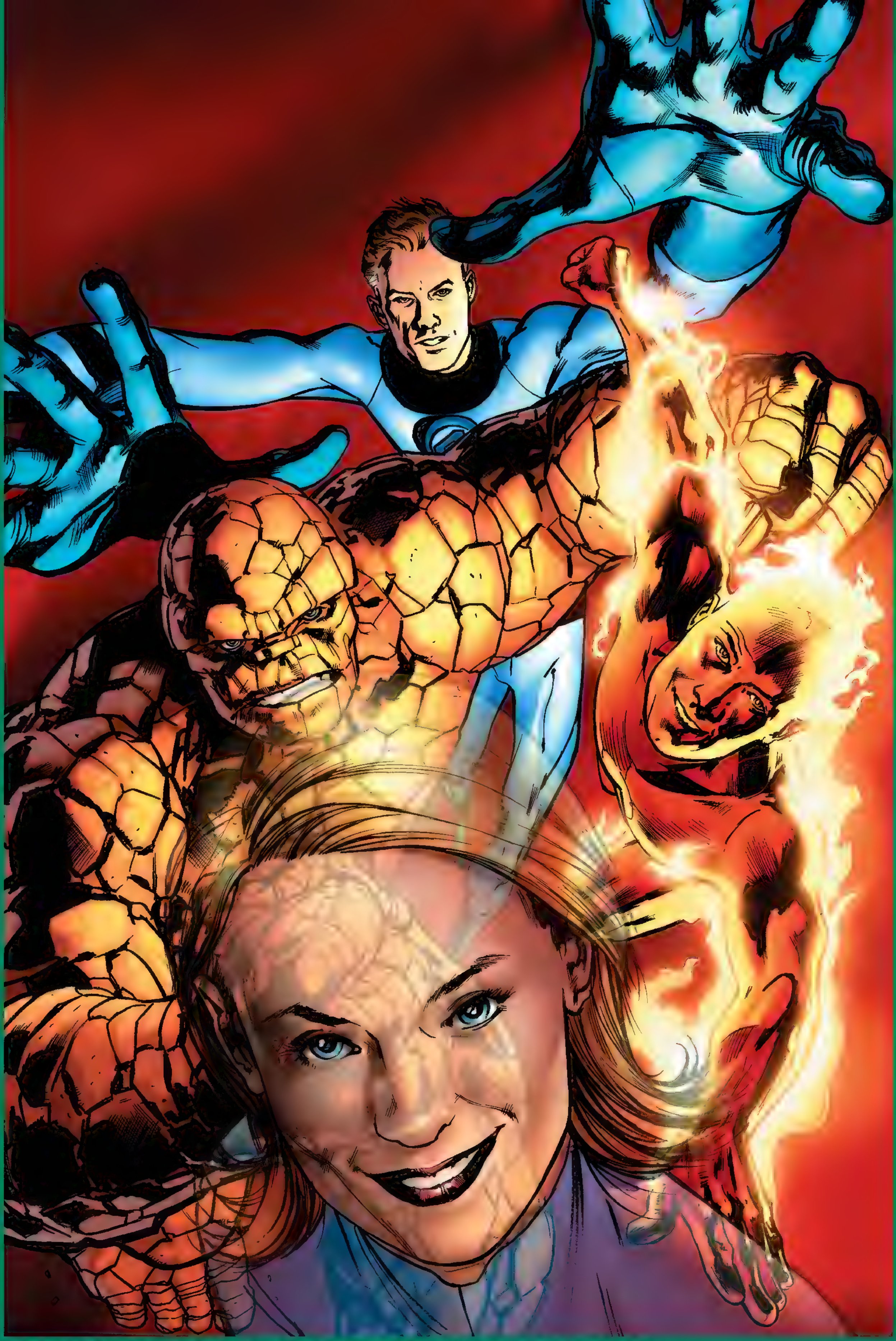
DOOM! BUT, IT'S--IT'S NOT POSSIBLE!

SIX MONTHS WHILE THEY TRIED IN VAIN TO MOVE THAT WHICH CANNOT BE MOVED, EXCEPT BY SOMEONE WORTHY OF THE TASK.

THAT WHICH BELONGS RIGHTLY AND SOLELY TO VICTOR VON DOOM, THE POWER AND THE FORCE REQUIRED TO SECURE, ONCE AND FOR ALL, MY MASTERY OVER ALL NATIONS.

NO...OH, NO...IT CAN'T BE...

...IT CAN'T BE...



FANTASTIC FOUR #536 BRYAN HITCH VARIANT

FANTASTIC FOUR #537 VARIANT

FANTASTIC FOUR #537

VICTOR VON DOOM AND HIS DOOMBOTS--

--HERE TO TRY AND SEIZE THOR'S HAMMER, WHICH CRASHED IN OKLAHOMA SIX MONTHS AGO AND WAS PUT UNDER TOP SECRET STUDY BY THE GOVERNMENT.

JUST ONE SMALL PROBLEM.

IT'S NOT POSSIBLE.

YOU CAN'T BE HERE...WE LEFT YOU IN HELL, WITH NO WAY OUT.

YES, YOU DID.

HOW DID YOU GET OUT?

HOW... DID I GET *OUT?*

"HOW...DID I GET *OUT?*"

BEREFT OF MY TECHNOLOGY...

...MYSTIC ARMOR DAMAGED...OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES MINIMAL.

ENEMY FORCES...

...SUBSTANTIAL.

IT MATTERS NOT. EVEN CORNERED, TO MY LAST BREATH I REMAIN WHO AND WHAT I AM. I WILL NOT HIDE, NOR TREMBLE, NOR BEG.

LET THEM COME AND RECKON WITH FURY THAT IS *DOOM* DEFIANT.

HERE I STAND, HELL-HORDE! UNBOWED!

BUT UNDERSTAND: IF IT IS MY DESTINY THAT I SHOULD PERISH THIS DAY, I SHALL NOT GO DOWN EASILY...AND I SHALL *NOT* GO DOWN *ALONE.*

RIP ITS SKIN...

WEAR IT FOR HIDE.

ITS *EYES* FOR ME.

TEAR ITS *FLESH* FROM ITS *BONES.*

ZZZZZAAAAAASSSHHHHH!

YES, COME, AND LET US MAKE AN END OF IT--

--THERE IS DOOM ENOUGH FOR ALL!

WHAT...THAT SOUND...AS IF THE SKY WERE TEARING ITSELF APART--

BADOOOOOM!!

THE GODS--

--THE GODS...ARE DYING.

WHAT... *MADNESS...* IS THIS?

I *KNOW* THESE *FACES*...THEY ARE *ASGARDIANS*... LOCKED IN A FINAL, PITCHED BATTLE... DYING...DYING...

...RAGNAROK...

...THE DEATH OF THE NORDIC GODS.④

④EDITOR'S NOTE: AS SEEN IN **THOR #80-85,** JUST IN CASE YOU THOUGHT WE WERE MAKING THIS STUFF UP. --TOM

THE MAGNITUDE OF THEIR BATTLE IS ECHOING ACROSS CREATION...RENDING THE VERY FABRIC OF HELL ITSELF!

THERE! SOMETHING MOVES THROUGH THE TEARS IN HELL'S DIMENSIONAL PLANE... PASSING RIGHT BENEATH ME...NO TIME TO HESITATE.

NOW!

FORCES...TEARING AT MY FLESH...MUST FORCE MYSELF...TO MOVE WITH THE ENERGY...TO RIDE IT THROUGH--

MUST SEE... WHAT ***POWER***...CAN COMMAND THE PLANES OF EXISTENCE ITSELF... WHAT...***HURLED***... ITSELF ACROSS TIME AND SPACE TO--

DO MY EYES DECEIVE ME? CAN IT BE?

IT IS THE HAMMER OF THOR!

I CAN *FEEL* ITS *POWER*...ITS COMMAND OVER *NATURAL* AND *SUPERNATURAL* ALIKE. I MUST REACH IT...I MUST--

THE CURRENTS... FIGHT ME...CANNOT PRESS...PAST THEM... JUST A LITTLE MORE....

...NO...NO... I--

NOOOOOOO!

KRAKA-BOOOOOOM!

...GONE... GONE...

"THE QUESTION REMAINS, OF COURSE, HOW CAN WE TURN THIS TO OUR ADVANTAGE?"

WITH THE DEPARTURE OF OUR LATE LAMENTED LEADER NOW ENTERING ITS SECOND YEAR, I THINK IT IS SAFE TO ASSUME DOOM WILL NEVER BE RETURNING TO LATVERIA.

THUS DO HIS... TOYS...FALL TO OUR POSSESSION.

BEFORE WE CAN USE THEM FOR OUR OWN PURPOSES, WE MUST REDRESS THEM INTO SOMETHING A BIT MORE...CONTEMPORARY, MORE ACCEPTABLE, MORE...*US.*

OR WE LEAVE THEM AS THEY ARE...TO INTIMIDATE THE PEOPLE INTO THINKING THAT DOOM WALKS AMONG US STILL.

HIS EGOTISM WAS TRULY AMAZING. TO HAVE AN ARMY OF MECHANICALS YOU DO NOT NEED A FACE AT ALL...BUT HE GAVE THEM HIS *OWN* FACE, SO THAT WHEN HE LOOKED UP, HE SAW HIS OWN IMAGE, REFLECTED A HUNDRED TIMES.

ANY *OTHER* MAN--

URKK-

ANY *OTHER* MAN--

--WOULD NOT BE VICTOR VON DOOM.

CRACK

I REQUIRE A BATH.

ALSO A NEW PRIME MINISTER.

BUT THE LATTER CAN WAIT. THE FORMER CANNOT.

YES, YOUR EMINENCE.

OF COURSE, YOUR EMINENCE.

ALSO, SOMETHING ENTERED EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE TEN NIGHTS AGO...THE TEN NIGHTS IT TOOK ME TO RESTORE MY STRENGTH AND RETURN HERE TO INTERRUPT YOUR...FESTIVITIES.

I WANT IT LOCATED.

BUT...YOUR EMINENCE...IF IT HAPPENED TEN DAYS AGO, AND WE WERE NOT AWARE OF IT AHEAD OF TIME, OUR SYSTEMS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN TRACKING IT, AND--

NONETHELESS, YOU WILL FIND IT.

OR THE NUMBER OF OPEN POSITIONS IN MY GOVERNMENT WILL GROW TO THREE.

YES, YOUR EMINENCE...OF COURSE.

HOW ARE WE GOING TO--

SHUT UP! WE'LL FIND A WAY. IT'S JUST--

WHAT?

I THOUGHT I SMELLED BRIMSTONE...

"HOW DID I GET *OUT*?"

HOW DID I GET *OUT*, YOU ASK ME?

IT IS....

...FAR, FAR TOO LONG A STORY. AND IT MATTERS NOT.

BECAUSE *DOOM* HAS COME TO CLAIM THAT WHICH SUMMONED HIM FROM THE DARKNESS... THAT WHICH IS *HIS* BY RIGHT...WHILE *YOU*...

...ARE SHORTLY TO BECOME *IRRELEVANT*--

--AND SEVERELY OUT-NUMBERED.

REED--

I KNOW, I --

INCOMING!

WE CAME AS SOON AS WE SAW THE EXPLOSION. ARE YOU OKAY?

WHOWMP!

I CAN BUY US A MINUTE, REED, BUT NO MORE.

WE DON'T HAVE MORE THAN THAT ANYWAY, SUE.

BEN... GRAB HOLD.

WHAT--

DOOM'S DOWN THERE, BEN...THE *REAL* DOOM...HE'S AFTER THOR'S HAMMER. I NEED YOU TO STOP HIM. WE CAN HOLD OFF THE DOOMBOTS LONG ENOUGH TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO--

DOOM?

HOW'D HE GET *OUT?* I--

WHOOOOAAAAAAA!

YOU CAN'T LET HIM GET THE POWER OF THAT HAMMER, BEN...DO WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO...

"...BUT STOP HIM."

HEY, DOOMIE... HOW'S IT CLANKIN'?

STAND ASIDE, GRIMM...I HAVE NO TIME FOR INTERRUPTIONS.

YEAH? THEN I GUESS YOU BETTER *MAKE* TIME--

BOOM!

KA-WHOOM!

--'CAUSE IT'S HAMMER-TIME!

"YOU ARE A FOOL, BENJAMIN GRIMM.

"I CRAWLED THROUGH HELL ITSELF TO GET HERE.

"DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU AND YOUR OUTGUNNED COMRADES ARE GOING TO STOP ME WHEN I'M THIS CLOSE TO MY GOAL?"

OKAY, HOLD ON... LEMME THINK...

UHMMMMMMMMMMM...

YOU BETCHA, SUNSHINE.

MY TURN NOW.

AAAARRRGGHHH!

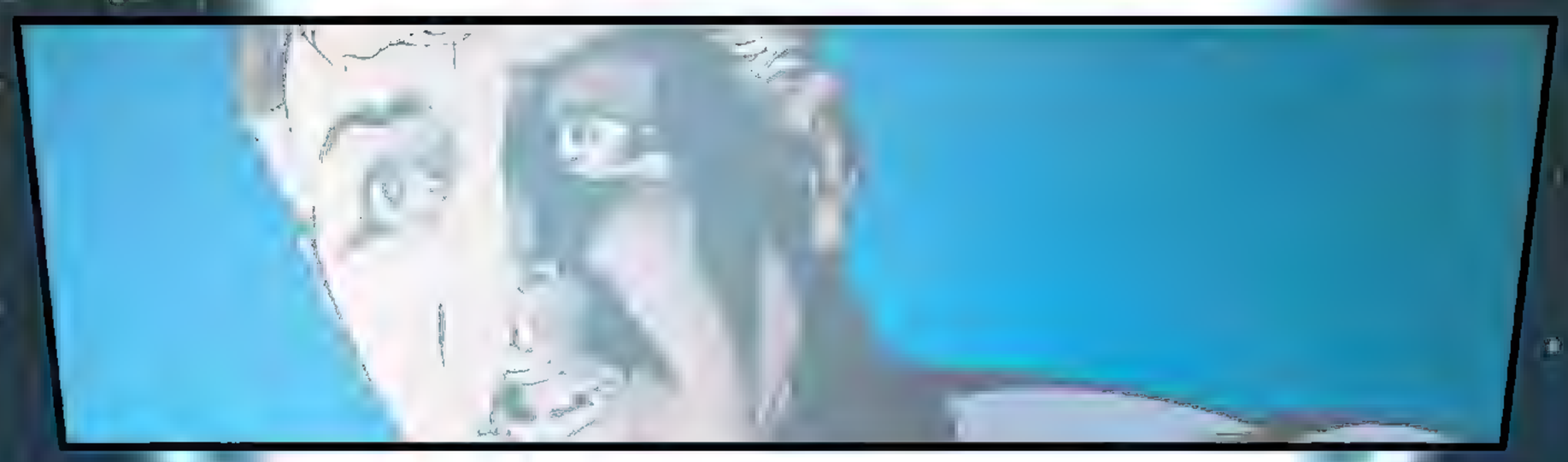
MY EYES!

YOU CANNOT STRIKE WHAT YOU CANNOT SEE.

I CAN STILL HEAR YA, YA CREEP, AND I--

WHATEVER YOU WERE GOING TO SAY AT THE END OF THAT SENTENCE, GRIMM--

--IT'S FAR, FAR TOO LATE.



WHAT--

--THE HECK--

--WAS THAT?

I...I DON'T KNOW, I...

BEN? BEN, CAN YOU HEAR ME? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

YEAH... SWELL...

NOW I KNOW WHAT A TOASTED MARSHMALLOW FEELS LIKE.

OW...

THE QUESTION IS, WHERE'S--

OH.

WELL, *THERE'S* SOMETHING YOU DON'T SEE EVERY DAY.

NO...IT'S NOT RIGHT...I THOUGHT--

--I *FELT* THE TOUCH OF THE ASGARDIANS AS THEY FELL...

...FELT THE *POWER* OF THOR FOR JUST A MOMENT AS RAGNAROK TORE THROUGH HELL ITSELF. I THOUGHT--

--I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE ENOUGH.

I--

--I WAS WRONG.

BUT I WILL NOT ALLOW MYSELF TO REMAIN AND SUFFER YOUR GLOATING.

KEEP THE CURSED HAMMER... DOOM DOES NOT NEED IT.

LET IT BE...THOR'S TOMBSTONE!

JOHNNY, CAN YOU--

ARE YOU KIDDING? AFTER THAT BLAST, I'M DOING GOOD JUST TO *STAND.*

WHAT *WAS* THAT, REED?

I'M NOT SURE, JOHNNY.

DOOM SAID SOMETHING ABOUT HAVING BEEN TOUCHED BY THE POWER OF THE DYING ASGARDIANS WHILE HE WAS IN HELL. PERHAPS BY TOUCHING IT, HE--

--WOKE IT UP, FOR LACK OF A BETTER PHRASE.

THAT BEING THE CASE, THEN PERHAPS THAT BLAST OF FORCE WAS A SIGNAL OF SOME KIND.

A SIGNAL? TO WHOM?

I DON'T KNOW, I--

BEN? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT DOWN THERE?

BEN...?

WHAT'RE YOU--

C'MON, STRETCH, TELL THE TRUTH--

--IF *YOU* HAD THE CHANCE--

--UNNNGGGHH--

--WOULDN'T *YOU* GIVE IT A SHOT--

--URRRRRRKKKK--

--JUST IN CASE?

"BECAUSE AFTER ALL... IT HAS TA BELONG TA *SOME*BODY."

--WHERE SCIENTISTS ARE STILL PUZZLING OVER A BRILLIANT FLASH THAT LIT UP THE NIGHT SKY OVER OKLAHOMA TONIGHT.

THE FLASH LASTED ONLY A MOMENT, BUT WAS APPARENTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR CAUSING A BLACKOUT OVER MOST OF THE STATE.

JUST THE ONE TICKET?

THAT'S RIGHT.

ONE-WAY?

THAT'S RIGHT.

THERE YOU GO. BETTER GET A MOVE ON...THE BUS IS ABOUT TO LEAVE.

I WILL. THANKS.

DBI

THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN REPORTS OF EXPLOSIONS AND THUNDER IN THE SAME REGION. THOUGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS REFUSE TO COMMENT ON THESE REPORTS, ONE THING SEEMS CERTAIN--

--SOMETHING MAJOR IS COMING TO OKLAHOMA.

OKLAHOMA

TOYOTA

The HAMMER FALLS

PART TWO

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #529

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #529 MIKE WIERINGO VARIANT

Mr. Parker Goes to Washington

PART ONE OF THREE

PETER?
PETER...?

YOU SAY SOMETHING?

HMMMM?

I SAID, DID YOU SAY--

PETER?

PETER, IT'S TONY. SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, BUT IT IS ALMOST NOON.

COULD YOU COME DOWN TO THE LAB? I NEED TO SEE YOU.

UMMM... SURE THING, BOSS.

JUST GIVE ME TWO SECONDS TO JUMP IN THE SHOWER.

TONY?

YES, MARY JANE?

TELL ME THIS...BIRD...IS VOICE ONLY, YOU CAN'T SEE IN HERE.

THIS BIRD IS VOICE ONLY. I CAN'T SEE IN THERE.

NICE TAN, BY THE WAY.

IT WAS A JOKE, I SWEAR, IT WAS A JOKE.

HELLO?

TAP-TAP

IS THIS THING ON?

HEY BOSS, WHAT'S UP?

YOU DO KNOW THAT EVERY TIME YOU SAY "HEY BOSS" YOU SOUND JUST LIKE CHICO MARX, RIGHT?

AND I'M TOTALLY COOL WITH THAT...AS LONG AS THAT DOESN'T MAKE YOU MARGARET DUMONT.

SO LIKE I SAID...WHAT'S UP?

I'M ALMOST DONE PUTTING THE FINAL TOUCHES TO YOUR NEW UNIFORM.

I'VE TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE SOME SLIGHT... IMPROVEMENTS.

WHAT WAS WRONG WITH THE OTHER ONE?

COME ON, PETER, IT WAS JUST...*CLOTH.*

OKAY, GRANTED... I DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING ELSE TO WORK WITH.

I KNOW.

BUT I... *DO.*

I'VE INCORPORATED MESH WEBBING THAT CAN ALLOW YOU TO GLIDE FOR SHORT DISTANCES. HEAT-RESISTANT KEVLAR MICRO-FIBER THAT CAN RESIST SMALL-CALIBER BULLETS.

BUILT-IN FIRE, POLICE AND EMERGENCY SCANNER. AUDIO AND VISUAL AMPLIFICATION, INCLUDING INFRARED AND ULTRA-VIOLET...

...CARBON FILTERS IN THE MOUTH AREA TO KEEP OUT TOXINS, AND A SHORT-RANGE GPS MICROWAVE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM, ALL ROUTED THROUGH A COMPUTERIZED CONTROL SYSTEM IN THE TITANIUM CHESTPIECE.

HEAT VISION?

NO.

ROCKET BOOTS?

WHEN YOU'RE OLD ENOUGH TO DRIVE.

AW, DAAAAAAD... C'MON...

I'M STILL TWEAKING A FEW OTHER THINGS, BUT BASICALLY IT'S GOOD TO GO. FEEL LIKE TAKING IT OUT FOR A SPIN?

SURE THING. BY THE WAY, SOMETHING I'VE BEEN MEANING TO ASK.

BACK AT THE HOSPITAL, MJ HAD HER ARM BROKEN IN THE FIGHT, BUT AFTERWARD, SHE WAS FINE. WHAT HAPPENED?

I'D ASK HER MYSELF, BUT I DON'T WANT TO MAKE HER RELIVE THAT DAY.

OH, THAT. WELL...ON THE WAY BACK HERE, JESSICA SET THE BONE, AND I INJECTED A COLD-SILICON COMPOUND AROUND THE BONE THAT SEALED THE BREAK BETTER THAN A SPLINT AND STOPPED THE SWELLING.

A SECONDARY LAYER OF FLESH-TONE SILICONE OUTSIDE THE ARM COMPRESSED ANY RESIDUAL SWELLING AND MASKED THE INJURY.

HAVING BROKEN SO MANY OF MY OWN BONES OVER THE YEARS, I'VE MADE THAT A STANDARD PART OF MY EMERGENCY KIT.

GOOD...BECAUSE, Y'KNOW, I WAS WONDERING--

YES, WELL, WHO WOULDN'T?

NOW ABOUT THOSE ROCKET BOOTS--

NOT A CHANCE.

ONE HOUR LATER....

EXIT 6A Delancey

FOUR-ADAM-SEVEN, WE ARE STILL IN PURSUIT, REQUEST BACKUP, REPEAT, REQUEST BACKUP AND ROADBLOCK--

BAD-1

--BUT DO NOT FIRE, WE BELIEVE THE SUSPECTS HAVE A HOSTAGE--

NOT A CHANCE, WHAT'RE YOU, NUTS? HAVEN'T YOU EVER SEEN *COPS?* IT'S WHEN YOU GET *OFF* THE FREEWAY AND STUCK IN TRAFFIC THAT THEY NAIL YOU.

WE CAN GET OFF UP THERE--

THE *IMPORTANT* THING...IS TO *LOSE* THE PURSUIT BEFORE THEY GET A CHOPPER IN THE AIR.

LIKE THIS.

U-SAVE

Porter Ave. ½ mile

BRRRRRRP-

BRRRRRRP!

NYPD

KRASH!

CRASH

OKAY, NOW AS SOON AS WE GET INSIDE THE TUNNEL, JAM ON THE BRAKES. WE'LL GRAB ANOTHER CAR WHILE WE'RE OUT OF SIGHT, THEN DRIVE OUT IN A WHOLE OTHER CAR.

BEAUTY.

WHAT ABOUT THE CHICK IN THE TRUNK?

I TOLD YOU, JIMMY. NO WITNESSES.

WHEN WE DITCH THE CAR... SPRAY THE TRUNK. END OF PROBLEM.

MAYBE NOT. LOOK UP THERE.

IT'S HIM.

"IT'S SPIDER-MAN."

DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM.

BUT--

I'VE SEEN HOW HE GETS AROUND. HE SWINGS FROM ONE THING TO ANOTHER. THERE'S NOTHING BETWEEN US AND HIM NEAR ENOUGH TO SWING FROM.

"WHAT'S HE GONNA DO...FLY?"

WELL, YOU KNOW, PETER...

...SOME SPIDERS DO GLIDE. I'M SURE IT'LL BE SECOND NATURE.

IF TONY SAID THEY'LL WORK, THEN THEY'LL WORK. HE SHOULD KNOW.

RUGS

UNLESS OF COURSE THIS IS SOME KIND OF ELABORATE SUPER-GUY VERSION OF *"PULL MY FINGER"*...

RENTS 555-7287

...HERE GOES NOTHINNNNNGGGGGG!

Open your arms, Peter. Open your arms. Open--

--your--

FLUTTER FLUTTER FLUTTER

YES!

XM.5 ROCK

Sons

WHUMPH!

HEY! WHERE'D HE GO?

DOESN'T MATTER, WE'VE GOT BIGGER FISH TO--

EXIT

WOMPH!

WHAT THE--?

SCREEEEEE

HI, LISTEN, I LEFT MY CAR KEYS AT HOME, ANY CHANCE I COULD BUM A RIDE TO WORK WITH YOU GUYS?

EXIT ONLY

SWINSON'S

BLAM-BLAM-BLAMBLAM!

DID YOU GET HIM?

I DUNNO--

--I DON'T HEAR ANYTHING.

CONFIRMED, WE HAVE UNITS IN PLACE AT 59TH STREET EXIT IN CASE THE SUSPECTS TRY TO GET OFF THERE.

59TH

MAYBE WE LOST HIM, WE--

HEY!

AND HERE... WE...

...GO!

OOOF!

WATCH IT!

FEELIN' GROOVY...

BAD-1

OIL

HIT THE BRAKES! HIT THE BRAKES!

STOP

SQUEEEEEEEAAALLL

NO...NO WAY... I'M NOT GOING BACK TO PRISON, YOU HEAR ME?

I'M NOT GOING BACK!

NO!

It was a rough landing, but the hostage should be--

--yes!

IT'S OKAY, MA'AM...YOU'RE ALL RIGHT.

YOU'RE ALL RIGHT.

OKAY...NICE AND SLOW...KEEP YOUR HANDS WHERE WE CAN SEE THEM.

YOUR FAULT...IT'S ALL *YOUR* FAULT...

...IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT!

NO!

No time to get her clear--

BAM!

UNNNHHH!

YOU'RE TOO LATE! I KILLED--

--SPIDER-MAN...?

I DON'T GET IT...I'VE SEEN YOU GET HURT ON TV...YOU'RE NOT INVULNERABLE. THAT SHOULD'VE KILLED YOU!

LOOK, BUDDY, THERE'S A RUMOR GOING AROUND THE STATION ABOUT SOMETHING THAT WENT DOWN AT THE HOSPITAL... AND--

WELL, *SOME* OF THE GUYS ARE SAYING--

--THAT HE *IS* DEAD.

SO, LIKE, I DON'T THINK YA SHOULD DO ANYTHING TO, Y'KNOW--

--*UPSET* HIM.

-EEP-

The perfect end to the perfect day.

Except that I can't get "The 59th Street Bridge Song" out of my head.

Ah, well.

Dee-dee-dee, dee-dee-dee, feelin' groovy...

AND THE COP SAYS, "SO, LIKE, I DON'T THINK YA SHOULD DO ANYTHING TO, Y'KNOW--

--UPSET HIM."

ACCORDING TO MY NEW SCANNERS, THE GUY'S HEARTBEAT *DOUBLED.*

IT...WAS... WONDERFUL.

SO THE TEST DRIVE WAS A SUCCESS.

AND THEN SOME. SO I WANT TO SAY THANK YOU.

SAME HERE. I'M IN FAVOR OF ANYTHING THAT HELPS MAKE SURE PETER COMES BACK SAFELY.

THEN YOU'RE MOST WELCOME.

THERE'S JUST ONE QUESTION I HAVE TO ASK.

AND THAT IS...?

WHY?

WHY NOT? YOU WERE OUT OF UNIFORMS, YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT, I HAD THE PARTS LYING AROUND--

AND I APPRECIATE THAT, NO MISTAKE.

BUT I *KNOW* YOU NOW, I *KNOW* HOW YOU THINK AND I HAVE A SUSPICION THAT THERE'S MORE TO ALL THIS THAN HELPING ME ACCESSORIZE.

YOU'RE RIGHT, PETER. WHICH IS WHY I WANTED TO SEE BOTH OF YOU TONIGHT PRIVATELY.

TOLD YOU I WASN'T BEING PARANOID.

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT...

MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE HERE, YOU AND I HAVE A GREAT DEAL IN COMMON, PETER. WE'RE BOTH SCIENTISTS, LEVELHEADED, PRACTICAL...WE DON'T JUST REACT, WE *EVALUATE.*

WE HAVE SIMILAR TEMPERAMENTS, AND WE SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE.

KLINGON?

THE LANGUAGE OF COMMON SENSE.

THERE ARE SOME POTENTIALLY... DIFFICULT TIMES COMING, PETER. I'M HOPING THOSE TIMES CAN BE AVOIDED, BUT IN CASE I'M WRONG--

--IT WOULD BE GOOD TO HAVE SOMEONE AT MY SIDE THAT I CAN DEPEND ON.

I APPRECIATE THE COMPLIMENT, BOSS, BUT NOW THAT I'VE HAD TIME TO PLAY WITH THE REST OF THE TEAM, I KNOW THAT YOU CAN DEPEND ON EVERY SINGLE *ONE* OF THEM.

EXCEPT LOGAN.

WELL, YEAH, EXCEPT LOGAN.

THERE'S NOT *ONE* OF THEM THAT WOULDN'T PUT HIS OR HER LIFE ON THE LINE FOR YOU.

EXCEPT LOGAN.

WELL, YEAH, EXCEPT LOGAN.

NORMALLY, I'D AGREE WITH YOU, BUT KNOWING WHAT I KNOW...I'M NOT SURE THAT'S GOING TO BE TRUE OVER THE LONG HAUL.

GOD, LET ME BE WRONG.

EVERY NIGHT, I GO TO SLEEP HOPING THAT I'M WRONG.

PETER, I'VE TAKEN A SPECIAL INTEREST IN YOU FROM THE DAY I INVITED YOU TO COME HERE. YOU, AND MJ, AND MAY, YOU'RE LIKE FAMILY TO ME.

THE ADDAMS FAMILY?

PETER--

THE MUNSTERS?

PETER... *LISTEN* TO ME.

I WANT TO HIRE YOU OUT IN THE OPEN, FULL-TIME, AS MY SECOND, MY PROTÉGÉ...I WANT YOU TO GO WHERE I GO, SEE WHAT I SEE, HEAR WHAT I HEAR.

I NEED SOMEONE I CAN TRUST IMPLICITLY TO BACK ME UP.

NOT TO PUT TOO FINE A POINT ON IT...I NEED YOUR HELP. AND YOUR WORD, THAT YOU'LL STICK WITH ME THROUGH WHAT'S COMING, NO MATTER WHAT.

SOUNDS LIKE A BLOOD OATH TO ME.

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT IT IS, PETER.

IF YOU NEED SOME TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT, I UNDERSTAND.
NO, IT'S JUST--
IT'S YOUR CALL, PETER.
CAN YOU AT LEAST GIVE ME SOME IDEA WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT?
I CAN'T... NOT UNTIL I HAVE YOUR WORD TO KEEP THIS SECRET, EVEN FROM THE REST OF THE GROUP, UNTIL I SAY OTHERWISE.
EVEN STEVE?
YES.
EVEN STEVE.
LOOK, TONY, I--
YOU'VE BEEN GOOD TO US, ESPECIALLY TO MAY, AND MJ, AND...AND I OWE YOU A LOT. YOU'VE PUT YOURSELF ON THE LINE FOR ME AGAIN AND AGAIN. I *TRUST* YOU.

I TOOK A VOW A LONG TIME AGO TO HELP PEOPLE WHO NEEDED ME...AND TO BE THERE FOR THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THERE FOR ME.

NO QUESTIONS ASKED, NO QUARTER GIVEN.

WHATEVER IT TAKES, WHATEVER IT COSTS, IN TIME OR IN BLOOD--

--I'M THERE.

YOU'VE GOT YOUR BLOOD OATH.

THANK YOU, PETER. THAT MEANS A GREAT DEAL TO ME. A GREAT DEAL.

SO HERE'S A LITTLE READING MATERIAL TO GET YOU STARTED.

ONCE YOU'VE READ IT OVER, GIVE ME YOUR THOUGHTS. AND PACK YOUR BAGS--

--BECAUSE WE'RE GOING TO WASHINGTON.

...OBOY...

The United States Senat

Metahuman Investigations Committee,
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Anthony Stark,
Stark Tower, New York City, NY

Mr. Anthony Stark,

At the request of the United States Sena
you are hereby summoned to appear before
the Senate Metahuman Investigations Com
o testify in closed session on matters
national security.

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #530

HEY BOSS... I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO GET SOME SLEEP.

I HAD A LAST-MINUTE MEETING TO ATTEND.

AT MIDNIGHT?

WE DON'T EXACTLY LIVE IN A NINE-TO-FIVE WORLD, PETER.

IT WAS--

SO WHAT WAS THE MEETING ABOUT?

"--A LONG-TERM PLANNING SESSION."

EDITOR'S NOTE: SEE THE NEW AVENGERS ILLUMINATI SPECIAL FOR MORE ABOUT THIS HIGHLY CLASSIFIED MEETING.

THAT'S YOUR WAY OF SAYING "SHUT UP, PETER" WITHOUT ACTUALLY HAVING TO *SAY* "SHUT UP, PETER," ISN'T IT?

YES.

BY THE WAY, I BROUGHT ALONG VERSION 2.0 OF YOUR UNIFORM. I MADE SOME MORE ADJUSTMENTS.

VERSION 2.0? BUT TONY, THE ONE I HAVE ISN'T EVEN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS OLD YET.

ART IS NEVER FINISHED, PETER, ONLY ABANDONED.

"I BEGIN TO SEE WHY YOU'VE GONE THROUGH FORTY-SEVEN VERSIONS OF YOUR IRON MAN ARMOR."

"FORTY-NINE."

"WHATEVER."

Mr. Parker Goes to Washington

PART TWO OF THREE

SO WHAT'S THIS CLOSED HEARING ALL ABOUT?

THE PROPOSED SUPERHUMAN REGISTRATION ACT. HAVEN'T YOU BEEN FOLLOWING THE NEWS?

I'VE BEEN A LITTLE BUSY LATELY, WHAT WITH FIGHTING CRIME AND BEING LEGALLY DEAD AND ALL.

THERE IT IS, PETER. THE ENEMY. YOU SHOULD READ IT BEFORE WE LAND.

YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT? THIS IS HEAVIER THAN THE LAST HARRY POTTER NOVEL. IT'D BE FASTER TO WAIT FOR THE MOVIE TO COME OUT.

THE BILL IS ONLY THE FIRST THIRTY PAGES. THE REST ARE RIDERS AND AMENDMENTS TACKED ON BY OTHER SENATORS TRYING TO PIGGYBACK THEIR OWN AGENDAS.

SUPERHUMAN REGISTRATION ACT

SO *THIS* IS THE BILL, AND ALL *THIS* IS FROM GUYS TRYING TO GET TAX MONEY FOR ROAD IMPROVEMENT, FISHERIES, GRANTS, STATUES OF ELVIS--

EXACTLY.

DEMOCRACY... GOTTA LOVE IT.

OKAY, I'LL GIVE YOU THE TOP SHEET.

THE SENATE IS UNDER SIGNIFICANT PRESSURE TO FORCE PEOPLE LIKE US, PEOPLE WITH ***POWERS***, TO REGISTER OUR REAL NAMES WITH THE GOVERNMENT OR FACE PROSECUTION.

YOU'RE KIDDING.

YOU'RE NOT KIDDING.

ARE THEY NUTS? HOW LONG DO YOU THINK IT WOULD TAKE *ANY* OF THE USUAL SUSPECTS TO GET THEIR HANDS ON THAT INFORMATION?

THEY SAY THEY CAN KEEP THE INFORMATION CONFIDENTIAL.

WELL, GOOD, BECAUSE NORMALLY I'D BE WORRIED, BUT FORTUNATELY WE'VE ***NEVER*** HAD ***ANY*** PROBLEMS WITH LEAKS ***BEFORE***.

ARE THESE GUYS NUTS?

NO, PETER, THEY ACTUALLY HAVE A POINT. NONETHELESS, THE REASON I'M GOING TO WASHINGTON IS TO TRY TO TALK THEM OUT OF IT.

AND WHAT IF YOU ***CAN'T*** TALK THEM OUT OF IT?

THERE ARE... OTHER OPTIONS. BUT I'D RATHER AVOID THAT ROUTE IF HUMANLY--OR SUPERHUMANLY--POSSIBLE.

MY ***HOPE*** IS THAT WE CAN REASON OUR WAY OUT OF THIS SITUATION.

"BECAUSE EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THOSE OTHER OPTIONS IS JUST DOWNRIGHT UGLY."

EDITOR'S NOTE: SOME OF US AT MARVEL DISAGREE WITH THIS STATEMENT, AND FEEL THAT MANY OF THOSE OPTIONS ARE PERFECTLY REASONABLE.

EDITOR'S NOTE: OKAY, BUT THE REST OF US DON'T FEEL THAT WAY.

EDITOR'S NOTE: WHO ASKED YOU?

EDITOR'S NOTE: LOOK, WE'VE ALREADY BEEN THROUGH THIS--

EDITOR'S NOTE: YOU'RE NOT LISTENING--

MEET BACK HERE IN TWENTY MINUTES?

DONE AND DONE, BOSS.

EDITOR'S NOTE: NO, YOU LISTEN! I'M TIRED OF YOU ROLLING IN HERE EVERY DAY AT NOON, DRINKING ALL THE COFFEE WITHOUT MAKING A FRESH POT, TAKING THREE-HOUR LUNCHES, AND THEN THINKING YOU CAN COME IN HERE AND TELL ME HOW TO--

EDITOR'S NOTE: SSSSH! WATCH IT, QUESADA'S COMING DOWN THE HALL!

EDITOR'S NOTE: MOVE ALONG, NOTHING HERE TO SEE.

OKAY, PETER, HERE'S A RUNDOWN OF YOUR UPGRADES.

EDITOR'S NOTE: YEAH, JUST THE WHOLE MARVEL UNIVERSE ABOUT TO IMPLODE.

EDITOR'S NOTE: WILL YOU PLEASE SHUT UP!?!

...I'VE ADJUSTED THE FABRIC SO IT USES A LIQUID METAL NANO-FIBER THAT CAN MORE OR LESS DISAPPEAR WHEN NOT NEEDED.

SO YOU CAN WEAR IT UNDERNEATH YOUR ORDINARY CLOTHES AND NOT HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT IT. IT RESPONDS TO NEUROCHEMICAL IMPULSES, SO ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS THINK IT THERE--

--AND IT'LL BE THERE.

COOL.

THE NANO-FIBER CAN ALSO CONFORM TO OTHER STYLES YOU'VE AFFECTED OVER THE YEARS.

IN CASE YOU WANT TO MAKE PEOPLE THINK YOU'RE NOT WEARING THE SOUPED-UP VERSION--

--OR IF YOU SIMPLY WANT A CHANGE OF PACE.

HMMMM...

THE SUIT CAN ALSO BLEND INTO A VARIETY OF BACKGROUNDS. THE DARKER THE BACKGROUND, THE BETTER THE CAMOUFLAGE.

BUT I'VE SAVED THE BEST PART FOR LAST.

NOW...*WITHOUT MOVING YOUR ARMS*...THINK THAT YOU WANT TO REACH OUT AND PICK SOMETHING UP.

HOLY--

SNIK!

SNIK!

SNIK!

@#!%#&%!

THE WALDOES CAN PICK THINGS UP SAFELY AND LOOK AROUND CORNERS, DISPLAYING THE RESULTS IN YOUR EYEPIECES. THEY ALSO HAVE LIMITED FIGHTING CAPABILITIES, BUT THEY'RE PRETTY FRAGILE, SO ONLY USE THEM SPARINGLY.

YOU CAN ALSO--

SMASH

CHRK

I'M *SO* GOING TO KILL HIM, I--

OOOH, I CAN SEE INTO THE NEXT HOTEL FROM HERE...

SO TELL THE TRUTH, BOSS...WAS THAT BIT WITH THE WALDOES YOUR VERSION OF *"PULL MY FINGER"*?

I THOUGHT YOU'D BE AMUSED.

I WAS... AFTER I PEELED MYSELF OFF THE CEILING.

AND YOU'LL BE SEEING A BILL FOR THE DAMAGES REFLECTED ON YOUR DIAMOND AMERICAN EXPRESS CARD.

"JUST A MOMENT'S AMUSEMENT SINCE THINGS ARE GOING TO GET VERY SERIOUS, VERY QUICKLY, AND THERE MAY NOT BE MUCH ROOM FOR LEVITY LATER ON."

"YOU'RE NOT SERIOUSLY ***WORRIED*** ABOUT THIS, ARE YOU, BOSS? I MEAN, COME ON, THIS IS US...THIS IS YOU...

"...WHAT COULD GO WRONG?"

NO SHOT. REPEAT, NO SHOT. WILL REACQUIRE THE TARGET LATER.

CONFIRMED.

"THANK YOU FOR COMING, MR. STARK."

WE ARE HONORED TO HAVE YOU HERE TODAY, BOTH IN YOUR ROLE AS AN INDUSTRIALIST, A FORMER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, AND, OF COURSE, AS IRON MAN.

FORMER IRON MAN, SENATOR DICKERSON.

YES, OF COURSE, WHAT *WAS* I THINKING?

OH, WAIT, I KNOW WHAT I WAS THINKING.

I WAS WONDERING IF YOU WOULD GIVE THAT SAME ANSWER IF YOU WERE UNDER OATH, WHICH CARRIES WITH IT THE PENALTY OF PERJURY?

WHAT DO *YOU* SAY TO THAT, MR. STARK?

I SAY...

...THAT THE SENATOR CAN PUT ME UNDER OATH IF HE SO WISHES. BUT THAT WAS NOT THE UNDERSTANDING WHEN I WAS ASKED TO APPEAR HERE. IF I AM TO TESTIFY UNDER OATH, THEN WE'LL HAVE TO RECESS UNTIL I CAN BRING IN COUNSEL TO APPEAR WITH ME.

THAT *IS* STANDARD PROTOCOL WHEN SPEAKING UNDER OATH, IS IT NOT?

SO THIS YOUNG MAN IS NOT COUNSEL?

NO, SIR. THIS IS PETER PARKER, AN ASSOCIATE AT STARK INDUSTRIES, WHO I HIRED FOR BOTH HIS SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE AND HIS WORK AS A PHOTOJOURNALIST CHRONICLING A NUMBER OF POWERED HEROES OVER THE YEARS.

UHMMM... HI.

YOU'LL SPEAK WHEN YOU'RE SPOKEN TO, SON.

YESSIR.

WELL, *NEXT* TIME, THEN, I SUPPOSE.

BECAUSE I THINK IT VERY LIKELY THAT THERE *WILL* BE A NEXT TIME, MR. STARK.

BUT IN THE MEANTIME, LET'S PROCEED.

THE CHAIR RECOGNIZES SENATOR WHITMORE.

MR. STARK, THE PRESENCE WITHIN THE UNITED STATES OF SUPERHUMANS, OR SUPER HEROES, AS SOME CALL THEM, WAS MOST PRONOUNCED IN THE YEARS AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR, STARTING AROUND 1946.

"THESE INDIVIDUALS, OPERATING IN DISGUISE, THEIR IDENTITIES UNKNOWN, FREQUENTLY ENGAGED IN BRUTAL CONFLICTS IN WHICH SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE WAS DONE TO LIFE AND PROPERTY."

MR. STARK, ACCORDING TO OUR BEST ESTIMATES, FROM 1946 TO THE PRESENT, SUCH BATTLES HAVE INCURRED ALMOST TWO HUNDRED ***BILLION*** DOLLARS IN DAMAGES... COSTS THAT LOCAL AND FEDERAL AGENCIES HAVE BEEN FORCED TO ABSORB BECAUSE WE DON'T KNOW WHO ELSE TO BILL FOR THE EXPENSES.

LET ME REPEAT THAT NUMBER, MR. STARK. TWO HUNDRED ***BILLION*** DOLLARS.

WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT NUMBER?

MY RESPONSE TO THAT NUMBER...IS ANOTHER NUMBER.

FORTY-SEVEN.

FORTY-SEVEN.

FORTY-SEVEN ***WHAT?***

FORTY-SEVEN OCCASIONS ON WHICH SUPER HEROES PREVENTED THE ENTIRE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT FROM BEING VAPORIZED, CONQUERED OR NUKED BACK INTO THE STONE AGE.

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BUDGET FOR 2006 ***ALONE*** IS 419 BILLION DOLLARS.

TWO HUNDRED BILLION, OVER SIXTY YEARS, IS THREE HUNDRED MILLION PER YEAR. THAT'S ***LESS*** THAN THE PENTAGON SPENT JUST THIS YEAR ON CERAMIC BODY ARMOR.

FOR SAVING THE ENTIRE NATION, FORTY-SEVEN TIMES OVER.

I THINK WE'RE GETTING OFF CHEAP, SENATOR.

THAT'S A VERY PRETTY SPEECH, MR. STARK, BUT IT DOESN'T REALLY ADDRESS THE POINT. WE ALL MAKE MISTAKES, DON'T WE?

YES, SIR.

SO THESE SELF-PROCLAIMED HEROES *ALSO* MAKE MISTAKES?

YES, SIR.

AND DON'T YOU THINK THEY SHOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THOSE MISTAKES?

DOCTORS HAVE TO REGISTER WITH THE AMA, PILOTS HAVE TO REGISTER WITH THE FAA...HECK, TAXI DRIVERS HAVE TO REGISTER WITH THE LOCAL DMV...SO THAT IF THERE'S AN ACCIDENT, THEY CAN BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS.

IF A CAB DRIVER HAS TO REGISTER IN CASE THERE'S A FENDER-BENDER, WHY SHOULD WE EXEMPT INDIVIDUALS WHO CAN DO SUCH TREMENDOUS DAMAGE?

WELL, MR. STARK? DO YOU HAVE AN ANSWER FOR THAT?

NO, SENATOR. I'M AFRAID I DON'T.

DOES ANYONE OBJECT TO HEARING FROM MR. PORKER--

PARKER.

--FROM MR. PARKER?

VERY WELL, GO AHEAD.

I DON'T HAVE THE WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE MR. STARK HAS IN DEALING WITH PEOPLE WITH GREAT POWERS, BUT IN MY LIMITED EXPOSURE...WELL...

SEE, GREAT POWER... ALSO BRINGS WITH IT A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY, TO--

I'M NOT DOING THIS VERY WELL. SO LET ME TRY THIS.

THERE'S THIS THING CALLED THE DOCTRINE OF PROPORTIONATE RESPONSE. THE BIGGER THE BAD GUY, THE BIGGER THE GOOD GUY YOU NEED TO STOP HIM.

THE BAD GUYS ARE BAD GUYS MOST OF THE TIME. BUT THE GOOD GUYS...ARE ONLY *BEING* THE GOOD GUYS... PART-TIME.

"THEY HAVE LIVES, AND FAMILIES, AND LOVED ONES WHO WOULD BE AT TERRIBLE RISK TO THESE VERY SAME BAD GUYS IF THEIR IDENTITIES WERE REVEALED.

"IN THOSE PERSONAL MOMENTS, THEY OR THEIR FAMILIES COULD BE HARMED...BECAUSE THE BAD GUYS KNOW THAT IF THEY WIPE OUT OR NEUTRALIZE ENOUGH OF THE SUPER HEROES...

"...THERE WON'T BE ANYONE WHO CAN STOP THEM THE 48TH TIME THIS COUNTRY IS IN JEOPARDY."

POLICE OFFICERS, PROSECUTORS, JUDGES, EVEN ELECTED OFFICIALS AND THEIR FAMILIES FACE SIMILAR THREATS EVERY DAY, MR. PARKER. WHAT KEEPS OUR DEMOCRACY HONEST IS THAT WE DON'T OPERATE BEHIND MASKS.

I KNOW...

"...BUT ALL THOSE PEOPLE ASPIRED TO THOSE JOBS. MOST SUPER HEROES NEVER *ASKED* FOR THESE POWERS, NEVER *WANTED* THEM. BUT ONCE THEY HAD THEM--

"--THEY KNEW THAT THEY HAD TO DO WHAT WAS *RIGHT* IN A SYSTEM THAT WOULD NEVER ALLOW THEM TO OPERATE OPENLY.

"THEY'RE *TRYING* TO *HELP*, SENATOR."

BUT IF THAT'S TRUE, WOULDN'T IT BE SIMPLER IF THEY *COULD* REGISTER, PRIVATELY AND SECURELY, WITH AN AGENCY THAT WOULD THEN *ALLOW* THEM TO DO WHAT YOU DESCRIBE OPENLY AND *LEGALLY?*

IF YOU WERE, SAY, ANT-MAN, WOULDN'T IT BE A *COMFORT* TO YOU TO KNOW THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND THE POLICE WERE YOUR *ALLY*, NOT YOUR *ENEMY?*

IF ANYTHING, YOU MAY HAVE JUST MADE THE MOST COMPELLING CASE OF *ALL* FOR JUST THE KIND OF REGISTRATION WE'RE DEBATING HERE TODAY.

DON'T YOU AGREE?

I--

--PROBABLY SHOULDN'T SAY ANYTHING ELSE.

I AGREE.

THEN I SUGGEST A TEN-MINUTE RECESS.

BANG!

PETER...PIECE OF ADVICE WHEN DEALING WITH LAWYERS OR POLITICIANS.

PRETEND I'M A LAWYER.

YESSIR.

"MR. PARKER, DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?"

IT'S... 10:35.

WRONG ANSWER.

BUT IT'S THE TRUTH.

YES, BUT IT'S ***STILL*** THE WRONG ANSWER TO, "DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?"

10:35

THE CORRECT ANSWER...IS "YES." AND YOU ***LEAVE*** IT THERE. IF THEY WANT MORE INFORMATION, LET THEM ***ASK*** FOR IT. NEVER VOLUNTEER ***ANYTHING.***

YOU MEAN LIKE I JUST DID.

YES.

GOTCHA.

SO DID I SCREW UP?

YOU SPOKE TRUTH TO POWER.

IS THAT WRONG?

NO, NOT WRONG.

JUST VERY UNUSUAL IN THIS PLACE.

"SO HOW'S IT GOING, PETER?"

IT'S GOING SWELL. IN FACT, IF IT WERE GOING ANY *SWELLER*, THEY'D PROBABLY HAVE TO *DEPORT* ME.

OH, DEAR. WHAT HAPPENED?

I OPENED MY MOUTH AND SPOKE WHEN I SHOULDN'T HAVE.

WELL, *THAT'S* NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE.

HEY!

JUST TRYING TO LIGHTEN THE MOOD, PETER. I'M SURE IT'S NOT AS BAD AS YOU THINK.

I DON'T KNOW...MAYBE. I JUST FEEL LIKE I'M IN WAY OVER MY HEAD. I MEAN, AT THE END OF THE DAY, I'M A KID FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD, THIS ISN'T MY KIND OF SCENE, I--

PETER? IS SOMETHING WRONG?

I'M NOT SURE, I JUST--

"--I HAD THE STRANGEST FEELING.

"YEAH, THAT FEELING. NO, I DON'T SEE ANYTHING."

YOU'RE RIGHT, MAYBE I'M JUST TIRED. STILL, IT WOULDN'T HURT TO HAVE A LOOK--

PETER, WE'RE BACK ON.

OOPS, GUESS NOT. GOT TO GO, MJ. GIVE AUNT MAY MY LOVE, AND SAVE SOME FOR YOURSELF.

BYE.

FOUR HOURS, FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER...

--AND WHILE THERE ARE STILL PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED, THE SYSTEM OF ANONYMOUS, POWERED INDIVIDUALS SERVING THEIR COUNTRY HAS WORKED WELL FOR OVER SIXTY YEARS.

CHANGING THAT SYSTEM NOW WOULD ONLY CREATE A NEW AND POSSIBLY MORE DANGEROUS SERIES OF PROBLEMS.

MR. STARK, YOU JUST USED AN INTERESTING WORD. *DANGEROUS*. WOULD YOU CARE TO ELABORATE?

PROHIBITION NOT ONLY USHERED IN THE AGE OF ORGANIZED CRIME, IT TURNED ORDINARY CITIZENS INTO LAW-BREAKERS OVERNIGHT. THE SAME THING HAPPENED WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE FLED THE DRAFT DURING VIETNAM.

THIS ACT, IF PASSED, WOULD TURN MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE SERVED THIS COUNTRY AS PATRIOTS BUT REFUSE TO REGISTER...INTO CRIMINALS.

ONCE THAT HAPPENS, WHO KNOWS WHERE IT WILL END?

SOME MIGHT TAKE THAT AS A THREAT, MR. STARK. IS THAT HOW YOU MEAN IT? OR, TO PUT IT MORE PRECISELY--

--WHOSE SIDE WOULD *YOU* BE ON?

I HAVE ALWAYS SERVED AT THE PLEASURE OF MY COUNTRY, AND ITS LEADERS.

NOTHING IN THAT SENTENCE HAS CHANGED, OR WOULD EVER CHANGE.

THANK YOU FOR THE CLARIFICATION, MR. STARK.

THIS COMMITTEE IS RECESSED UNTIL TOMORROW AT NINE A.M. YOUR PRESENCE WILL STILL BE NEEDED, MR. STARK.

BANG!

I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DO IT, BOSS. I'D RATHER FACE AN ARMY OF BAD GUYS THAN HAVE TO GO BACK IN THERE AGAIN.

IT'S JUST SOMETHING YOU GET USED TO. AS YOU WILL, IN TIME. REMEMBER, YOU'RE MY RIGHT HAND NOW.

MR. STARK! WE DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE GOING TO BE HERE... IT'S NOT ON THE PUBLIC SCHEDULE--

IT WAS A PRIVATE SESSION, NOT A BIG DEAL, HARDLY WORTH MENTIONING.

I THINK I'D RATHER BE A FOOT RIGHT NOW, TO TELL YOU THE--

MR. STARK!

WAS THIS THE COMMITTEE ON SUPERHUMAN AFFAIRS? DO YOU THINK THEY'RE GOING TO PASS THE REGISTRATION ACT?

THE COMMITTEE AND I HAD A GOOD MEETING, AND WE DISCUSSED SOME OPTIONS THAT, AS FAR AS I KNOW, ARE STILL JUST THAT... OPTIONS.

COME ON, PETER...WE HAVE PLACES TO BE.

RIGHT, BOSS.

SO WHERE ARE WE GOING NOW?

SOME PLACE WITH A STEAK.

OH, I THOUGHT...I MEAN, THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A GOOD CHANCE FOR US TO GET THE WORD OUT TO PEOPLE, I MEAN MOST OF THEM LIKE--

--WHAT WE--

--DO.

DOWN!

PTING!

WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE, BOSS, GOT TO--

WHOMP!

DO NOT MOVE.

GREAT...

...IT'S THE TITANIUM MAN.

I AM HERE TO KILL STARK. MY EMPLOYERS HAVE GIVEN ME INSTRUCTIONS TO AVOID COLLATERAL DAMAGE IF AT ALL POSSIBLE.

BUT IF YOU WISH TO DIE, PLEASE, STAY WHERE YOU ARE.

I HAVE NO PREFERENCE.

The accent is Russian. I remember reading that the Titanium Man had been replaced, then the next guy was killed or retired or--

--doesn't matter. What matters is getting Tony the heck out of here, fast. Outside his armor, he's as vulnerable as anybody else.

Me...I don't have that problem.

TONY... GO!

WHAT--?

CAN'T SEE--

THERE!

NOW TO FINISH THIS.

THAT'S FUNNY--

--I WAS THINKING *EXACTLY* THE SAME THING.

COSMIC, HUH?

THIS IS NOT YOUR CONCERN.

SHRAKKK!

CONCERNED? I'M NOT CONCERNED.

I DO THIS FOR *FUN.*

MY MOM SAID IT WAS THIS OR A NEWSPAPER ROUTE, SO I--

OOOOOF!

WELL, YES, I *DID* WANT TO MAKE AN IMPRESSION, BUT STILL--

OW.

I DO NOT HAVE TIME FOR THIS.

YOU'VE =UNF= GOT THAT RIGHT, BORIS.

IN CASE YOU HADN'T NOTICED, THINGS ARE A LITTLE DIFFERENT AROUND WASHINGTON THESE DAYS, AND--

THERE THEY ARE! THE RADIO REPORTS WERE RIGHT!

SPIDER-MAN AND SOME GUY ARE ATTACKING THE SENATE BUILDING!

SONOFA--

K-TANG!

DOES IT LOOK LIKE WE'RE PALS, PAL? HUH? I--

OPEN FIRE!

UH-OH--

WHOOOAAAA!

WATCH WHERE YOU'RE POINTING THOSE THINGS, WOULDJA?

FWIP!

OH, NO YOU DON'T.

THIS ISN'T OVER, BUDDY. THIS FIGHT--

--IS JUST *STARTING.*

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #531

Mr. Parker Goes to Washington

PART THREE OF THREE

SO, IS THIS RIDE COVERED BY THE PRICE OF ADMISSION OR SEPARATE? BECAUSE THIS IS *FUN*, AND--

OH, COOL... I CAN SEE THOMAS JEFFERSON'S HOUSE FROM HERE.

INSECT.

ACTUALLY, SPIDERS AREN'T INSECTS, THEY'RE ARACHNIDS, BUT *LOTS* OF PEOPLE MAKE THAT MISTAKE, SO YOU SHOULDN'T FEEL BAD ABOUT *THAT*.

BUT I'M SORRY, THE WHOLE BORIS BADENOV ACCENT IS JUST TOO MUCH.

COME ON... SAY "*MOOSE AND SQUIRREL.*" JUST ONCE. YOU *KNOW* YOU WANT TO.

NO? THEN MAYBE YOU CAN TELL ME WHY YOU TRIED TO KILL MR. STARK--

--AFTER YOU WAKE UP, NATCH.

URRRGGHH!

FWOOSH!

Oh, crud--

--if I've damaged the Lincoln Memorial, this is *SO* coming out of my allowance.

For the next ten thousand years.

Okay, I saw him do a belly flop at the entrance...but where is he? I--

Wow...I never...

Wow.

FOURSCORE AND SEVEN YEARS AGO OUR FATHERS BROUGHT FORTH ON THIS CONTINENT A NEW NATION, CONCEIVED IN LIBERTY, AND DEDICATED TO THE PROPOSITION THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL.

NOW WE ARE ENGAGED IN A GREAT CIVIL WAR, TESTING WHETHER THAT NATION, OR ANY NATION SO CONCEIVED AND SO DEDICATED, CAN LONG ENDURE. WE ARE MET ON A GREAT BATTLEFIELD OF THAT WAR.

You gotta give it to him...the man could write, he--

--uh-oh--

UHHHNG!

NOW IT IS I WHO HAVE YOU!

AND NOW... DIE!

WHOOSH

IT'S THE AMAZING GLIDING SPIDER-MAN, NEW FROM TOYCO, ONLY $14.95. SHIPPING MAY NOT BE INCLUDED--

AND NOW TO FINISH THE ASSIGNMENT--

CAST YOUR EYES SKYWARD, BUB.

--BUT *HANDLING* WE'VE GOT DOWN TO A FINE ART.

URRRK!

KRASH!

AMERIKANSKI HUMOR.

MOST FUNNY.

WE KILL NOW.

URCCCHH--

Damn...he's faster than he looks. Granted, that isn't saying much, but still--

IT IS RIGHT THAT YOU SHOULD DIE NOW, FOR YOU ARE SOON TO BE AN EXTINCT BREED, LEAVING YOUR COUNTRY DEFENSELESS.

MY EMPLOYER BELIEVES THAT WHEN TONY STARK IS DEAD, THERE WILL BE NO ONE TO SPEAK FOR YOUR KIND...AND YOUR OWN GOVERNMENT WILL HUNT YOU DOWN AND ERADICATE YOU. WHICH IS ONLY FITTING.

SINCE THE FALL OF THE SOVIET UNION, I AND OTHERS HAVE BEEN FORCED TO SURVIVE ON OUR OWN, WITHOUT SUPPORT, AS MERCENARIES, TAKING WHATEVER JOB CAME ALONG. IT HAS BEEN HARD.

BUT WHEN MY PEOPLE WERE CONTACTED IN SECRET FOR THIS JOB, I KNEW THAT IT WOULD BE A PLEASURE.

I...I JUST--

I HAD ONLY TO WAIT FOR HIS ARRIVAL, AND THEN --

--WANT--

WHAT?

JUST... WANTED... TO SAY...

KLANNNNG!

...SURPRISE!

AAARRGGHHH!

Good...damaged the sensors in his helmet... he's swinging wild.

He may have backups, however...got to hit him hard before he can get them online.

KER-WHAMM!

BAMMMMM!

I feel the armor start to give, and I know... I've got him...I've got him...I've--

ENOUGH!

No! He's making a run for it.

Just one chance...try to snare him again--

--nuts!

See, I *TOLD* Tony I needed rocket boots, I--

This is your chance to look good in D.C., Peter. Don't mess it up.

Think up something catchy, something historic...

AND DON'T COME BACK!

WE APPRECIATE YOUR RETURN VISIT AFTER YESTERDAY'S RATHER DISTURBING EVENTS, MR. STARK.

THANK YOU, SENATOR DICKERSON. HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE INTERCESSION OF SPIDER-MAN, I MIGHT NOT BE SITTING HERE RIGHT NOW.

YES, BUT NOT IN THE WAY YOU THINK.

DEMONSTRATING, YOU BELIEVE, THE VALUE IN UNENCUMBERED SUPERHUMANS?

THE ATTACK AGAINST ME YESTERDAY WAS NEITHER RANDOM NOR ILL-CONSIDERED. IT WAS A DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO INTERFERE IN THE DELIBERATIONS OF THIS COMMITTEE, AND THE OUTCOME OF THE PROPOSED SUPERHUMAN REGISTRATION ACT.

I SUBMIT THIS RECORDING, MADE DURING THE BATTLE YESTERDAY, AS EXHIBIT ONE.

IT IS RIGHT THAT YOU SHOULD DIE NOW, FOR YOU ARE SOON TO BE AN EXTINCT BREED, LEAVING YOUR COUNTRY DEFENSELESS.

THIS COMMITTEE MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT AMERICA'S ENEMIES ARE NOT BOUND BY ANY RULES MADE HERE. THEY WILL ATTEMPT TO EXPLOIT THOSE RULES, HOWEVER WELL-INTENDED, FOR THEIR OWN DARK PURPOSES.

THE ATTACK ON ME YESTERDAY WAS ONLY THE FIRST VOLLEY IN THAT PROGRAM.

MY EMPLOYER BELIEVES THAT WHEN TONY STARK IS DEAD, THERE WILL BE NO ONE TO SPEAK FOR YOUR KIND...

...AND YOUR OWN GOVERNMENT WILL HUNT YOU DOWN AND ERADICATE YOU.

GENTLEMEN, I CAN GIVE YOU ALL THE TECHNICAL, LEGAL-SPEAK REASONS WHY THIS ACT IS A DANGEROUS STEP. BUT THE BIGGEST REASON IS ALWAYS THE SIMPLEST.

IF IT GOES WRONG, AS THESE THINGS TEND TO... IT COULD LEAD TO A KIND OF UNILATERAL DISARMAMENT OF OUR SUPER-POWERED CITIZENS.

WHICH IS *EXACTLY* WHAT OUR ENEMIES WANT.

PUBLIC OPINION IS, AT THE MOMENT, EVENLY DIVIDED ON THE IDEA OF FORCED REGISTRATION.

GIVEN THAT DIVISION, PERHAPS IT MIGHT BE BEST TO TABLE THIS ACT FOR THE TIME BEING.

PERHAPS.

IN WHICH EVENT THAT RECORDING WOULD APPEAR TO BE VERY CONVENIENT TO YOUR ARGUMENT, MR. STARK.

WHICH OF COURSE RAISES THE OBVIOUS QUESTION--

--HOW DO WE KNOW IT IS AUTHENTIC?

I CAN ANSWER THAT, SENATOR.

I WAS THERE. I CAN VOUCH FOR ITS AUTHENTICITY.

AND THERE'S SOMETHING *ELSE* I'D LIKE TO SAY TO THIS COMMITTEE--

HE NEVER LEARNS...

--AND IT'S THIS...

...YOU'RE RIGHT.

IT *WOULD* BE SIMPLER, AND MORE LEGAL, IF GUYS LIKE ME REGISTERED. IF WE WERE REGULATED, LIKE THE AMA OR ANY OF THOSE OTHER INITIAL-GROUPS.

THE PROBLEM IS THAT AFTER REGISTRATION ALWAYS COMES REGULATION.

YOU'RE ALL GOOD GUYS. BUT IF YOU HAD TO START DECIDING WHAT SORTS OF THINGS SUPERS *SHOULD* GET INVOLVED WITH, THEN YOU START ELIMINATING THE THINGS THEY SHOULD *NOT* GET INVOLVED WITH.

IN YOUR WELL-MEANING OPINION.

BUT GUYS LIKE ME GET INVOLVED IN THINGS SOMETIMES BECAUSE NOBODY ELSE *WILL*...BECAUSE IT'S NOT IN THE RULE BOOK, OR IT'S POLITICALLY INCONVENIENT, OR IT'S TOO WEIRD, OR--

--OR SIMPLY BECAUSE NOBODY ELSE *CARES.*

THE GOVERNMENT, THE BIG CORPORATIONS, THE MONEY GUYS...THEY ALL HAVE PLENTY OF PEOPLE WILLING TO PUT IT ALL ON THE LINE TO DEFEND THEM.

BUT SOMEBODY ON THE EDGE, SOMEBODY IN TROUBLE...THE KIND OF GUY WISER MINDS WOULD SAY SHOULD BE LEFT TO SOLVE HIS *OWN* PROBLEMS...

...WHO DOES HE GO TO?

LOTS OF THE OTHER SUPER-GUYS LIVE IN SHADOWS BECAUSE WHAT THEY DO IS STUFF YOU'D NEVER, *EVER* WANT TO KNOW ABOUT... BECAUSE YOU'D NEVER SLEEP WELL AGAIN.

LEAVING THEM ALONE TO OPERATE AS THEY SEE FIT GIVES YOU DENIABILITY, AND LETS THEM DIVE IN WHERE LOGIC WOULD SAY "STAY AWAY."

SO MAYBE THE BEST SOLUTION WOULD BE A KIND OF GOOD SAMARITAN LAW, LIKE THEY HAVE FOR DRIVERS, WHERE YOU CAN PROTECT EVERYBODY WHEN ONE PERSON DIVES IN TO DO SOMETHING TO HELP--

--WHILE EVERYBODY ELSE JUST DRIVES PAST.

YOU MAKE SOME INTERESTING AND COMPELLING POINTS, SON--

I WASN'T FINISHED.

THANK YOU, SIR, I'M JUST--

YESSIR.

AS I SAID... INTERESTING POINTS.

BUT IF YOU WANT THEM TO GO ON THE ***RECORD***, IF YOU WANT THEM TO BE ***CONSIDERED***, YOU MUST REMOVE THE MASK, SIT IN THE WITNESS CHAIR, AND SWEAR TO YOUR TESTIMONY UNDER OATH.

MEANING THAT YOU WILL HAVE TO PROVIDE THIS COMMITTEE WITH YOUR FULL NAME AND PLACE OF RESIDENCE.

ARE YOU WILLING TO DO THAT, SON?

I CAN'T.

AND ***THAT***, SON, IS EXACTLY ***WHY*** THIS LEGISLATION ISN'T GOING TO GO AWAY.

THIS IS A NATION OF ***LAWS***, AND THOSE LAWS ARE MEANINGLESS WITHOUT THE ABILITY TO ***ENFORCE*** THEM ***EQUALLY***.

YOU MAY BE ABOVE THE ***GROUND***, SON, BUT YOU ARE NOT ABOVE THE ***LAW***. THAT SUPER-POWER WE ALLOW TO NO ONE IN THIS REPUBLIC.

THE SENATE RECORDER IS INSTRUCTED TO STRIKE THE STATEMENTS OFFERED HERE FROM THE RECORD.

YES, SIR.

SO...I SHOULD GO, THEN.

I THINK THAT WOULD BE ADVISABLE.

"NOW, MR. STARK, IF WE CAN RETURN TO YOUR *SWORN* TESTIMONY..."

HEY, PETER.

HEY, BOSS.

LOOK, I WAS THINKING ABOUT HOW I MOUTHED OFF IN THERE, AND IF YOU WANT TO FIRE ME--

NO. YOU SPOKE YOUR MIND ABOUT SOMETHING IMPORTANT. REPUBLICS DIE WHEN PEOPLE STOP DOING THAT.

MAIN THING IS, REGARDLESS OF WHAT WAS ACTUALLY ALLOWED ON THE RECORD, WE GAVE THEM A LOT TO THINK ABOUT.

SO YOU THINK WE STOPPED THEM?

NO, BUT BARRING ANYTHING TO TURN PUBLIC OPINION AROUND, WE'VE MUDDIED THE WATERS ENOUGH TO SLOW THE PROCESS DOWN.

WE BUY A YEAR HERE, A YEAR THERE, AND SOONER OR LATER THESE THINGS DIE OF THEIR OWN WEIGHT.

GOOD... GOOD.

SO WHAT *ELSE* IS ON YOUR MIND?

I...IT'S NOTHING, I--

NOW YOU'RE GOING TO CLAM UP? WHERE WAS THAT IMPULSE EARLIER?

IT'S JUST--

--SOMETHING'S BEEN BOTHERING ME. I MEAN, NOBODY OUTSIDE THE SENATE COMMITTEE KNEW YOU WERE COMING IN YESTERDAY, EVEN THE REPORTERS DIDN'T KNOW.

BUT THE TITANIUM MAN KNEW. AND RIGHT BEFORE HE ATTACKED, YOU WERE IN A REAL HURRY TO GET AWAY FROM EVERY-BODY, ALMOST AS IF YOU--

AS IF WHAT, PETER?

NOTHING. I GUESS.

I WAS SO WORRIED EARLIER THAT I'D DAMAGED THIS PLACE. BEAUTIFUL, ISN'T IT?

YES, IT IS.

I'VE ALWAYS ADMIRED LINCOLN. WHEN THE SOUTH BEGAN GOING ITS OWN WAY, HE KNEW THAT TAKING A POSITION AGAINST THEM WOULD LEAD TO CIVIL WAR.

BUT HE DID IT ANYWAY. BECAUSE HE UNDERSTOOD SOME-THING...UNDERSTOOD IT MORE PERHAPS THAN ANYONE ELSE IN THAT TIME.

HE KNEW THAT A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF CANNOT STAND... A NATION CANNOT BE DIVIDED AND SURVIVE.

UNDER HIS ADMINISTRATION, BROTHER HUNTED DOWN BROTHER, FRIEND TURNED AGAINST FRIEND. IT WAS TERRIBLE. IT WAS BLOODY.

IT WAS ***NECESSARY.***

BECAUSE AT THE END, THE REPUBLIC HELD, AND THE NATION WAS RESTORED.

I SOMETIMES WONDER IF I WOULD HAVE HAD THE COURAGE TO DO AS HE DID.

YEAH, WELL, FORTUNATELY THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY, WHICH IS A GOOD THING--

--BECAUSE I DON'T THINK THE END OF THAT STORY WORKED OUT TOO WELL FOR MR. LINCOLN.

TONY...GIVEN HOW TITANIUM MAN'S SUDDEN APPEARANCE HELPED ENCOURAGE THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER THAT MAYBE REGISTRATION WASN'T IN OUR BEST NATIONAL INTEREST--

--I MEAN, YOU'D *TELL* ME IF YOU--

OF COURSE I WOULD, PETER...

"...OF COURSE I WOULD."

YOU HAVE THE MONEY?

RIGHT HERE, IN UNMARKED BILLS, AS YOUR AGENCY SPECIFIED.

MR. STARK ASKED ME TO TELL YOU THAT YOUR COOPERATION WAS BOTH APPRECIATED AND WELL-TIMED.

YES, WELL, YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME THAT SPIDER-MAN WOULD BE THERE.

I WANTED YOU TO REACT HONESTLY.

YOU DID.

YES. I SPOKE THE TRUTH--

--IT WAS ALL THE TRUTH...WHAT HAS BECOME OF US IN RUSSIA...AND WHAT WILL BECOME OF YOU, VERY SOON, I THINK.

WHEN YOUR GOVERNMENT TURNS ON YOU...WHEN YOU ARE HUNTED AND DRIVEN OUT... I WONDER--

--HOW WILL YOU FEEL THE DAY YOU RUN ERRANDS FOR OTHER PEOPLE... FOR BRIEFCASES FILLED WITH MONEY?

SAY "MOOSE AND SQUIRREL." JUST ONCE.

AMERIKANSKI HUMOR.

BUT SOON, NOT SO FUNNY, YES?

"SOON, NOT SO FUNNY AT ALL."

YOU GONNA BE IN THE SHOWER MUCH LONGER, MJ?

JUST A FEW MINUTES.

GOOD...I CAN *NOT* SEEM TO KEEP MY EYES OPEN.

YOU'VE HAD A LONG DAY, PETER. THAT'S A LOT OF STRESS.

WHY DON'T YOU TURN ON THE NEWS AND ZONE OUT? THAT'LL PUT YOU TO SLEEP.

OKELY-DOKELY.

--WHERE THE YANKEES PULLED IT OUT AGAINST KANSAS CITY 6-5 IN THE BOTTOM OF THE TENTH.

CLICK!

IT WAS A TENSE BATTLE WITH TWO MEN ON BASE WHEN DEREK JETER HIT A GROUND-RULES DOUBLE THAT BROUGHT BOTH MEN HOME, AND--

--JUST A SECOND, WE'RE GOING TO--

IS THIS RIGHT?

DO WE HAVE CONFIRMATION?

TO OUR VIEWING AUDIENCE, WE'RE JUST GETTING CONFIRMATION...BUT ACCORDING TO THE A.P. THERE'S BEEN A DISASTER IN STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT--

--INITIAL REPORTS ARE INDICATING AT LEAST...AT LEAST SIX HUNDRED HAVE BEEN KILLED AND COUNTLESS MORE BADLY WOUNDED...

ACCORDING TO AUTHORITIES ON THE SCENE, THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THIS DEVASTATION IS...

...IS THIS RIGHT?

WHO OR WHAT IS SPEEDBALL?

CIVIL WAR™

A MARVEL COMICS® EVENT

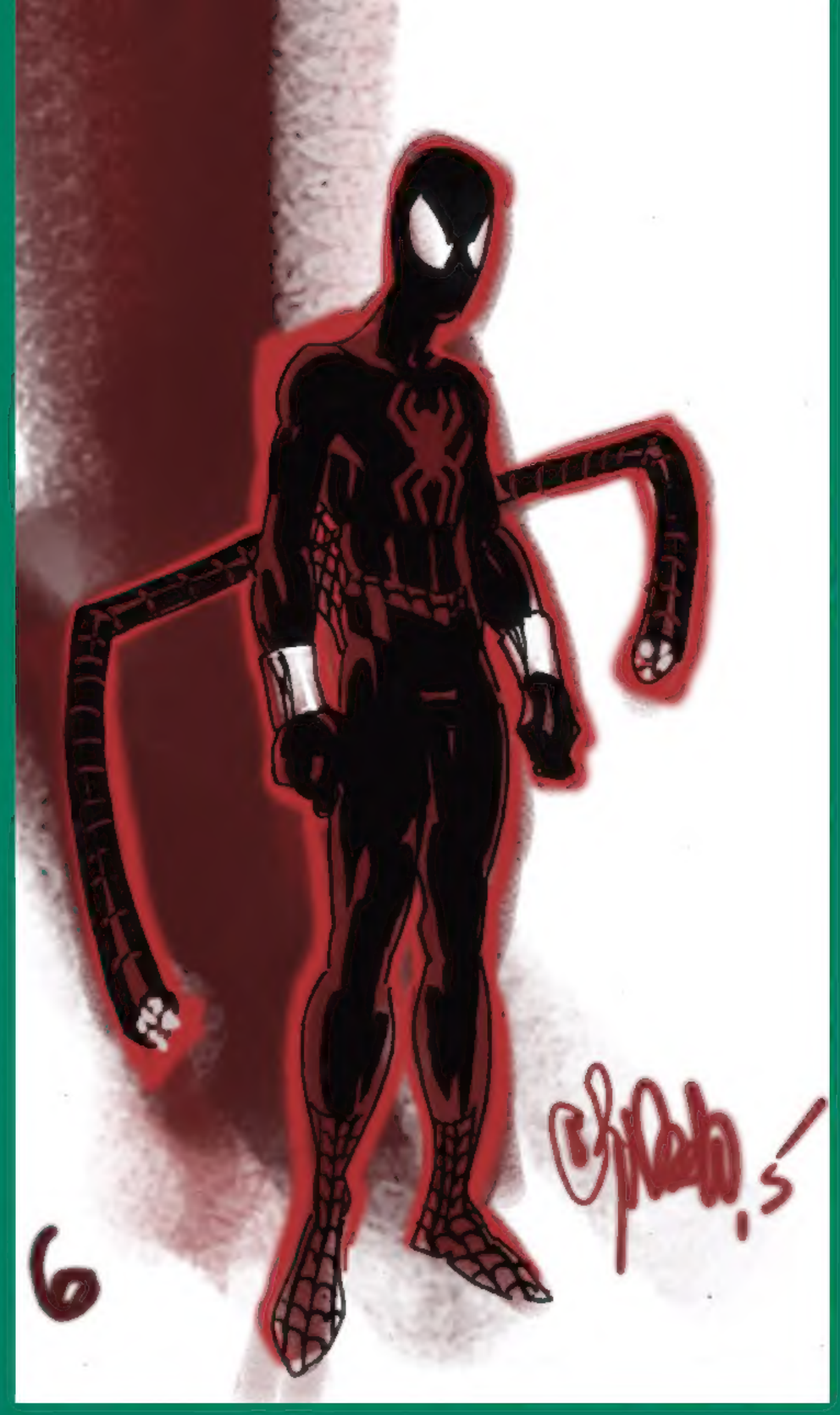
MILLAR

MARVEL

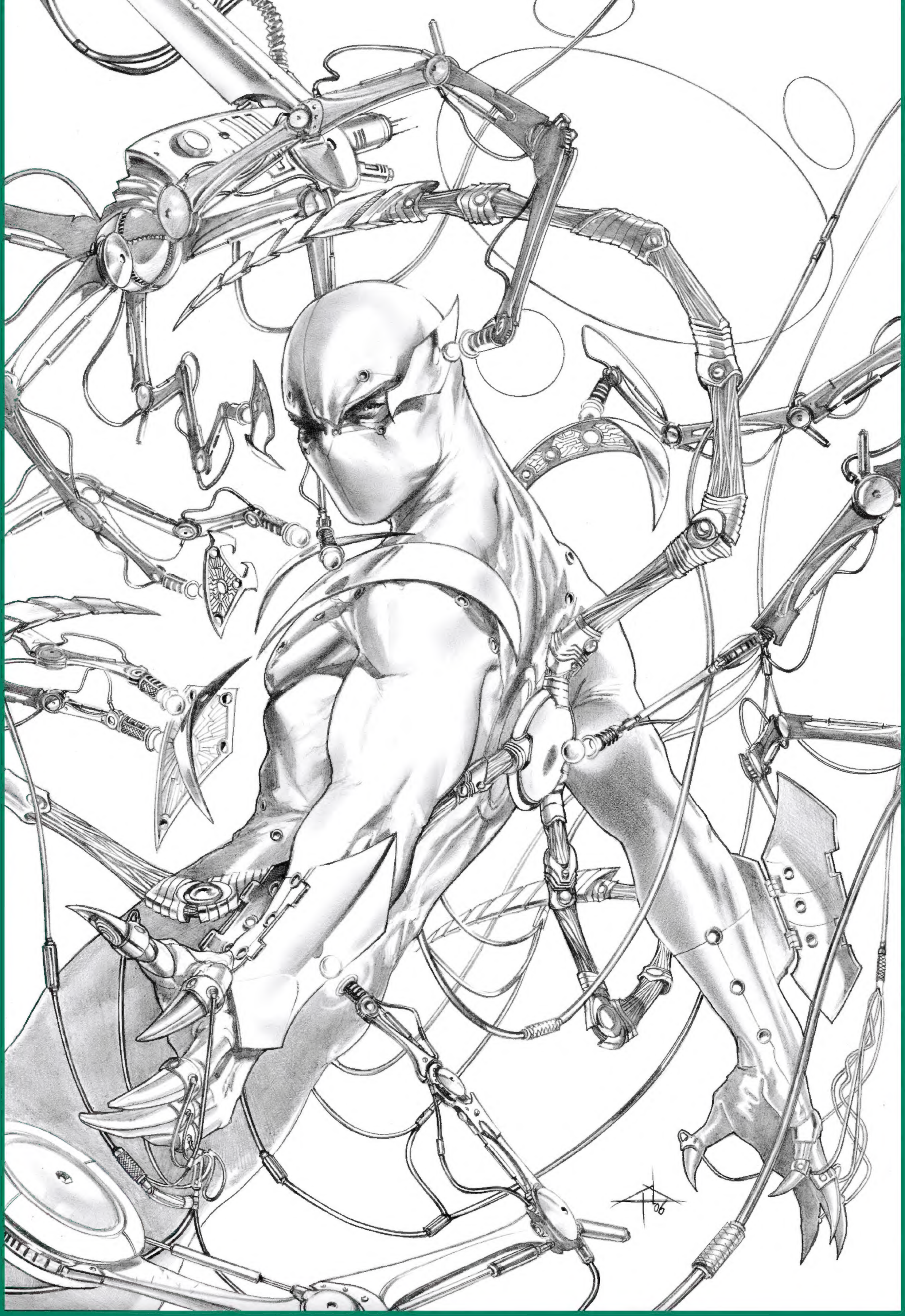
MCNIVEN

TO BE CONTINUED IN CIVIL WAR

EARLY COSTUME DESIGNS BY CHRIS BACHALO



TENTACLES REVISED
BY JOE QUESADA



CIVIL WAR: AMAZING SPIDER-MAN DECISIONS COVER
BY GABRIELE DELL'OTTO

...ARE YOU ON?

THE CLOUDS ARE QUICKLY BUILDING ON THE HORIZON FOR A STORM THAT WILL SPLIT THE MARVEL UNIVERSE DOWN THE MIDDLE, AND THE LINE IS DRAWN HERE!

RIPPED FROM THE PAGES OF *NEW AVENGERS* COMES THE EXPLOSIVE HIDDEN STORY OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE'S SECRET PAST, THE SECRET HISTORY OF MARVEL'S MOST SECRET TEAM – HOW THEY CAME TOGETHER, AND HOW THEY ARE RIPPED APART – SETTING THE STAGE FOR *CIVIL WAR*.

MEANWHILE, SPIDER-MAN'S GOT A NEW LEASE ON LIFE, NEW POWERS AND A NEW COSTUME WITH SOME VERY SPECIAL FEATURES – COURTESY OF HIS NEW BEST FRIEND, TONY STARK. SO WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG? LOTS, TRUE BELIEVER. THE BONDS THAT SPIDER-MAN NOW FORGES MAY VERY WELL DETERMINE HIS CAPACITY TO WITHSTAND THE COMING STORM.

AND FINALLY, A MYSTERIOUS OBJECT HAS FALLEN FROM THE HEAVENS TO CRASH IN THE MIDWEST, AND REED RICHARDS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR HAS BEEN CALLED IN TO TRY TO PIECE TOGETHER THE PUZZLE SURROUNDING IT. WHAT IS IT, AND HOW WILL IT LEAD INTO *CIVIL WAR* AND THE RETURN OF A MARVEL MAINSTAY?

COLLECTING THE *NEW AVENGERS: ILLUMINATI* ONE-SHOT, *AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #529-531* AND *FANTASTIC FOUR #536-537* – WRITTEN BY BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS AND J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI; AND ILLUSTRATED BY ALEX MALEEV, RON GARNEY, MIKE MCKONE AND TYLER KIRKHAM.

T+

MARVEL